

Huntley & Palmers *the first name you think of in* Biscuits

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PUNCH

FEBRUARY

16
1949Vol. CCXVI
No. 5645THANK YOU FOR
PUNCH VOL. X
PUNCH VOL. XI
PUNCH VOL. XIIFor conditions of sale and supply of Punch
see bottom of last page of text

TO BE SURE OF PLEASURE—

say *Player's Please*



The ROVER "Sixty" and "Seventy-five"

ONE of Britain's fine cars now made finer. In the new programme the Rover Company concentrate a number of important mechanical advances in a simplified range of high quality models, including completely new design engine and chassis, and independent front wheel suspension. Two engine sizes are available, 4-cylinder or 6-cylinder, and two types of saloon bodies incorporating many detail improvements.

THE 'SIXTY.'

(4-cyl.) 4 or 6-light saloon
Retail Price Purchase Tax Total
£845 : 0 : 0 £235 : 9 : 6 £1080 : 9 : 6

THE 'SEVENTY-FIVE.'

(6-cyl.) 4 or 6-light saloon
Retail Price Purchase Tax Total
£865 : 0 : 0 £241 : 0 : 7 £1106 : 0 : 7

ROVER

One of Britain's Fine Cars

THE ROVER COMPANY LTD., SOLIHULL, BIRMINGHAM AND DEVONSHIRE HOUSE, LONDON
CVS-93



Made by ABDULLA for those
who prefer the American style of blend



A. WANDER LTD. BY APPOINTMENT
OVALTINE MANUFACTURERS TO H.M. THE KING.

Quality

-has made Ovaltine the World's
most widely used Food Beverage

EXCEPTIONAL steps are taken to ensure the highest standards of quality and purity for 'Ovaltine'. Only the best is considered good enough for this delicious food beverage which has been, for many years, a valuable factor in the health of countless thousands of people.

The 'Ovaltine' Research Laboratories, of international repute, are staffed by fully qualified scientists, who check and test at every stage of manufacture. They continually explore new developments in dietetics and have made valuable contributions in this field.

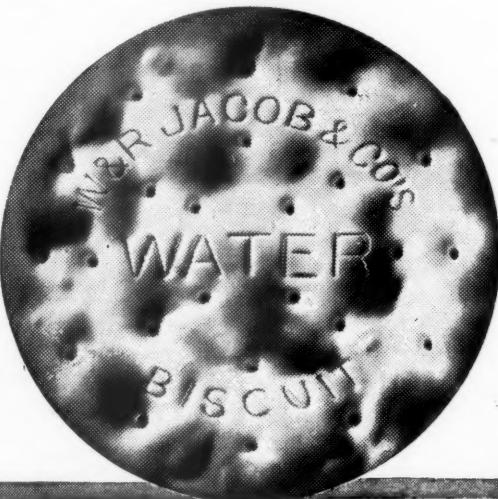
In the 'Ovaltine' Factory in a country garden, meticulous care is taken to perfect the safeguards of purity and hygienic efficiency. The 'Ovaltine' Dairy Farm with its herd of prize-winning Jersey cows, and the 'Ovaltine' Egg Farm extend to some 1,000 acres, and were specially established to standardize the excellence of the important ingredients used.

By this insistence on quality, 'Ovaltine' has achieved universal popularity and is most widely used in Hospitals and Nursing Homes throughout the world.

Drink delicious

Ovaltine
for Health & Vitality

P.712A



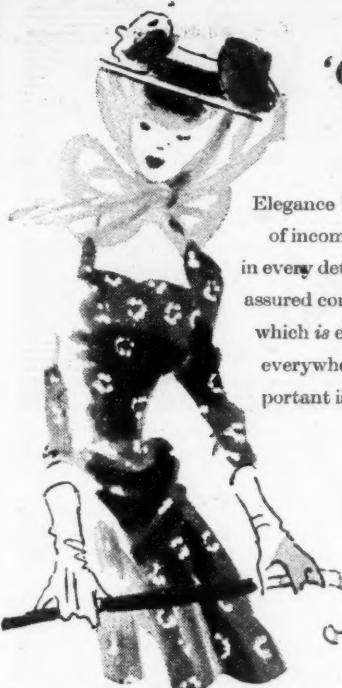
JACOB'S

Water Biscuits

with the nutty flavour people like

* Also specially packed for world-wide export

W. & R. JACOB & CO. (LIVERPOOL) LTD., BISCUIT MANUFACTURERS, ENGLAND



*'Gracious
Lady'...*

Elegance is a measure of quality—not of income. Only a studied perfection, in every detail of grooming can give that assured confidence, that poised serenity which is elegance. And elegant women everywhere know how essentially important is their choice of dress fabrics.

FABRICS MARKED

TEBILIZED

REGD.

HAVE TESTED CREASE-RESISTANCE

★ It is not enough if they are labelled 'crease-resisting.' No fabric is uncrushable, but all fabrics marked **TEBILIZED** resist and recover from creasing much as wool does naturally.

JUST LOOK!
it's an
Elizabeth Ann



YOU can see it's the aristocrat of cabinet sink units with solid stainless steel working surface all in one piece, and cabinet in beautiful cream enamel that's hard as flint.

There's a model to fit your kitchen—can't you picture it there?

EVERY UNIT
FULLY GUARANTEED
BY THE MAKERS

Illustrated is Double-Drainer Single-Sink model, size 63 in. x 36 in. x 21 in. Price 58 gns. (Mixer fittings extra.) H.P. terms. No dockets. This price does not apply to Ireland.

See the full range at any good builders' merchants or hardware store, or write for full particulars to Andrews Bros. (Bristol) Ltd., Stainless House, Weston-Super-Mare.

TAX FREE

The new Toledo model



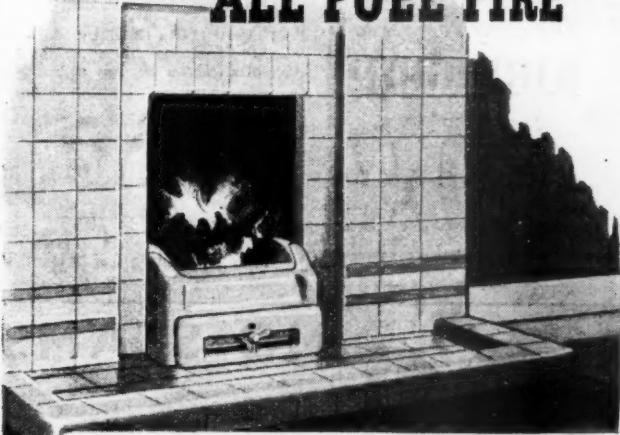
For this Relief

We know you have been longing for the comfort of Parker-Knoll springing, and we have fretted at the controls which prevented us giving it to you. At last there is some relief. We are now able to make an elbow chair in light metal, fitted with our standard Parker-Knoll, covered, tension springs in seat and back. There will not be a lot of them but if you act quickly you may get one. Try the best furniture store near you.

PARKER-KNOLL LTD
TEMPLE END, HIGH WYCOMBE, BUCKS

CVS-21

The SOFONO ALL FUEL FIRE



The Sofono Fire constructed for easy installation in existing fireplaces is designed on approved scientific principles and will burn any type of solid fuel—Coke, Coal, Coalite or Slack. It provides excellent radiant heat with the minimum of fuel consumption. Positive air control ensures all-night burning if desired, and gas ignition can be fitted to facilitate kindling. Available in various shades of vitreous enamel to match most tile surrounds. Ask your local dealer about it or write for fully illustrated brochure.

Available also as a convector model for supplying warm air to one or two upstairs rooms by the installation of suitable ducts.

GRANGEMOUTH IRON CO. LTD., FALKIRK
CONTROLLED BY FEDERATED FOUNDRIES LTD.



Horrockses^{REG.}

*the Greatest Name in Cotton
and Textile Fabrics*

SHEETS · PILLOWCASES · TOWELS · FLANNELETTES · WINCETTES
DRESS GOODS · SHIRTINGS · FURNISHINGS · UTILITY FABRICS · ETC.

HORROCKSES, CREWSON & CO. LTD., PRESTON, MANCHESTER, BOLTON, LONDON



That depends on the actual gentleman and the particular blonde, but ALL blondes prefer Good "Tempered" Kirbigrips. Now in 6 shades and 4 sizes: Standard, Large, Extra and Jumbo Sizes. Gold, Blonde, Silver Grey, Black, Brown. Standard also in White. And the new "Shellon": Covered Tortoiseshell style.

*The good tempered
KIRBIGRIP*

Also PINS, HAIR PINS,
SAFETY PINS, NEEDLES, CURLERS, ETC.
Obtainable from all good Stores, made in England by
Kirby Beard & Co., Ltd., Birmingham & London

1000



At a turn of the dial, Thor does a whole family wash of 16 lbs. in under an hour! Clothes stay in the machine; your hands don't touch water.

WASHING by super-agitator swirls hot suds through even the thickest clothes.

RINSING by power-overflow 'floats out' suds and dirt.

DAMP DRYING by double-speed spinning (600 r.p.m.) leaves clothes better than wringer dry—water being power-pumped away.

WASHING-UP? Simply switch tubs. Then Thor washes dishes,

glassware and silverware—and dries them!

Thor uses coupon-free washing powder and less hot water than other washers; requires no plumbing and, being vibrationless, no bolting down. Quiet as a whisper, it stands sink-high with a 25" square top—fitting any kitchen.

Before you buy a washing machine, compare all makes. Like 4,000,000 others, you too will choose a Thor.

See a demonstration today or write for illustrated brochure. H.P. Terms available.

Thor AUTOMATIC ELECTRIC WASHING MACHINE

(Dish-washing unit optional; can be added later, if desired)

Thor Appliances Ltd., (Dept. P) 55-59 Oxford Street, London, W.1

The decision
rests with baby



Baby makes it clear which milk is best. There are no words, but there are signs which loving eyes can read—sweet sleep, good temper, sturdy limbs, steady gains. These tell a mother surely that baby thoroughly approves of Ostermilk. (Up to four months baby should have Ostermilk No. 1 and, after that, change to Ostermilk No. 2).

Send 3d. for Ostermilk Baby Book: Dept. 135, Glaxo Laboratories Ltd., Greenford, Middlesex

Steady progress tells you

OSTERMILK
is right

... and FAREX for weaning

Weaning is happier with Farex to help. Glaxo Laboratories make this digestible, nourishing, bone and blood-building blend of cereals which is readily accepted by babies. Farex needs no cooking—just add sugar and milk.

NO SEAMS

VERY STRONG
VERY LIGHT
VERY COMFORTABLE

*Best
on Earth*

DUNLOP

48F/MB8(e)

TOMORROW
and every
day throughout the year

. . . someone will be celebrating a birthday, or maybe a wedding anniversary or other intimate occasion. Keep in mind these special dates and make certain that your relatives and friends are not overlooked—a Greeting Card will bring them so much happiness and joy.

The GREETING CARD AND
CALENDAR ASSOCIATION

"I wear my straps
with a difference..."

Don't I prove that while one strap is smart, two straps are doubly so? Mine are trimly buckled across the instep, deftly stitched for style. Note my low heel and beautiful balance. Briar Brown or Biscuit are my colours, in velvety 'crushed' leather. My name is 'RUTLAND' and I belong to the famous K family."



today's shoes - K shoes



Trio for
Elegance

Genuine Jamal Vapets

The RIGHT Jamalotion

2 3 The lightweight Jamal equipment—and so to the matchless Jamal wave, coveted for hair beauty.

Jamal
THE LUXURY PERMANENT WAVE
MACHINELESS . . .
KINDEST TO YOUR HAIR

Go to
a skilled
Hairdresser



Out of sight — out of mind
but . . . absence makes the
heart grow fonder of

Procea bread



ONCE TASTED—NEVER WASTED!

★ All genuine PROCEA loaves have the name PROCEA embossed on each side

Procea Products Limited, Procea House, Dean Street, London, W.1

Leading Light

OF THE SEWING CIRCLE

To help busy fingers . . . speed the progress of purl and plain — take the tedium from close work.

Such is the function of Anglepoise — lamp of 100 angles. Takes any position and holds it — its clear revealing beam on the work — *not in your eyes*. Saves current, as it needs only 25 or 40 watt bulb. Anglepoise is scarce — so when you see one on sale snap it up!

THE TERRY Anglepoise Lamp

Sole makers : HERBERT TERRY & SONS LTD., REDDITCH • London • Manchester • Birmingham

Keep
your
strength up.
the natural
way

Hovis

THE BETTER-BALANCED BREAD

**THE ROYAL ALBION
BRIGHTON**

A first-class hotel since 1826

Telephone:
8202 (4 lines).

Telegrams:
"Royalblon."

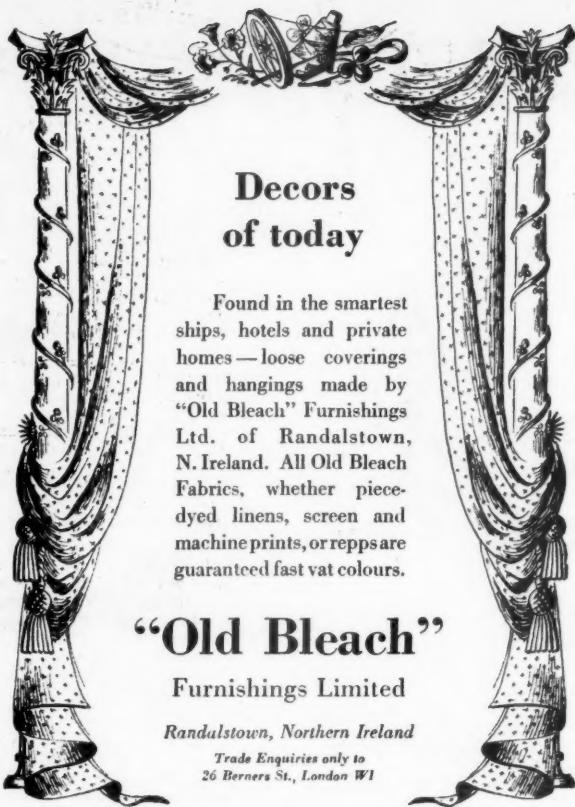
**QUEEN ANNE
SCOTCH WHISKY**



HILL THOMSON & CO. LTD.
EDINBURGH

Est. 1793

Holders of Royal Appointment to
successive Sovereigns since 1838



Decors of today

Found in the smartest ships, hotels and private homes—loose coverings and hangings made by "Old Bleach" Furnishings Ltd. of Randalstown, N. Ireland. All Old Bleach Fabrics, whether piece-dyed linens, screen and machine prints, or repps are guaranteed fast vat colours.

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Furnishings Limited

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Trade Enquiries only to
26 Berners St., London W1

Craven's
OF ORK
candies

of
delicate,
exclusive
and irresistible flavour

M. A. CRAVEN & SON, LTD., FRENCH ALMOND WORKS, YORK



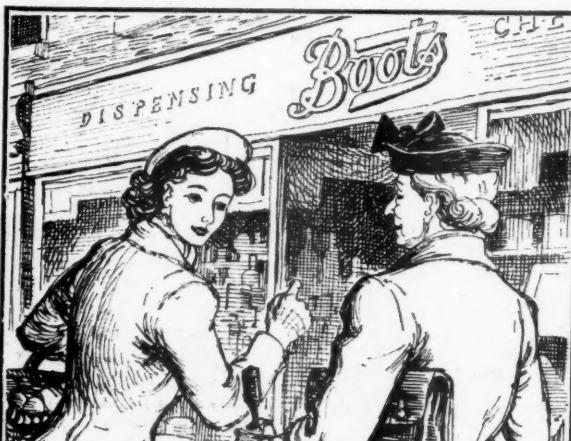
Now, we get constant supplies of hot water instantly—it never runs cold! There's no waste, and such a saving on my fuel bill!

Descriptive leaflet P—free.

14 WIGMORE ST., LONDON, W.1

EWART MULTIPONT
BATH - SINK
GEYSERS

For heating water by gas



"I must go into Boots"

WELL-TRIED winter remedies such as cough pastilles and lozenges are made and supplied by Boots. Sick-room requisites, too, are always available from any of Boots' branches. There are over 1,250 throughout the country, and each provides the same courteous service. And of course Boots offer outstanding value in everything they sell.

For all Medical
Supplies and Toilet
Preparations

Boots
THE CHEMISTS

**BOTTLED
VINEGAR
is best!**



**and this is the
BEST BOTTLED
VINEGAR**

Clayton's

IS THE NAME
TO BEAR IN MIND



Clayton's "Iceberg"
Fruit Squashes
and Table Waters

Clayton Brothers
London, S.W.18
Established 1838

A9

**BURNS
COKE**
which is in
plentiful
supply

It's SEVENTH HEAVEN
living with an **AGA**

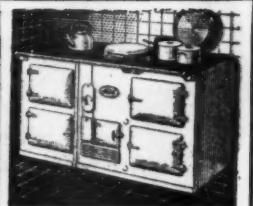
Royal Family Member

... and this cooker saves so much on fuel
it soon pays its cost!

Such bliss comes to the home —
after an Aga arrives! No wonder
many owners never forget the dealer
who put in their Aga — but greet
him always with heartfelt gratitude!

The beautiful Aga makes life so
different! Burning night and day, it
is always ready to cook for you —
perfectly, almost automatically. You
simply refuel it morning and night.
No fires to light. A damp cloth wipes
it clean. And you can have an Aga
that will also give you really hot
water in the bathroom or kitchen —
right round the clock!

Yet its luxurious comfort is not
really costly. The guaranteed maximum
yearly fuel consumption is so
low that your saving on fuel soon
covers the cost of your Aga. Its
quality is the same as in 1938 — and
there is no purchase tax. The Aga is
indeed a splendid investment!



THIS is the Aga Model E
Cooker for the larger household.
Its guaranteed maximum
fuel consumption per year is
3 tons burning coke (which is
in plentiful supply), or "Phurnacite".
Other models are available
and deliveries are now quicker.

Domestic models from £85 to
£115. Hire purchase terms
available.

For full details about the Aga, write to:

Aga Heat Ltd., 20 Orchard House, Orchard St., London, W.I.

(Proprietors: ALLIED IRONFOUNDERS LTD.)

SENIOR'S
FISH & MEAT PASTES

What is named
on the Label
is found in
the Jar!

Dogs prefer
SPILLERS
SHAPES

"SANATOGEN"
TONIC WINE

soothes tired nerves

"SANATOGEN" Tonic Wine is an admirable restorative for it combines the "pick-me-up" qualities of a rich, full-bodied wine with the active tonic properties of "SANATOGEN" Nerve Tonic Food.

The word "SANATOGEN" is a Registered Trade Mark.

10/- PER BOTT.
5/- HALF BOTT.

CVS-12



No brush can reach the S-bend,
the pipe at the back of the lavatory.
But Harpic can!

Harpic is specially made for
lavatory cleansing. It not only
cleans and disinfects the whole
pan — it sweeps right
round the S-bend at the
back where no brush can
reach — kills germs, leaves the
whole pan clean and sweet.



HARPIC

Specially made for the lavatory

DOLCIS
for men

'OSLO'

A really good shoe in the Dolcis 'SPORTSMAN' range! Made in stout but supple sports calf with a sturdy sole and the special 'Oslo' sealed welt. In brown only.

5/-

AT DOLCIS SHOE STORES

Simpson
WEATHERPROOFS

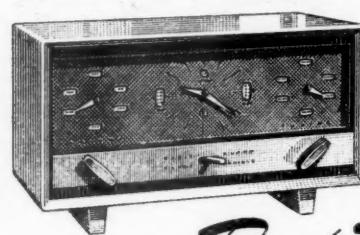
SIMPSON
WEATHERPROOFS
CUT LIKE FINE TOP-COATS
SHOW THE SMARTER SIDE
OF WET WEATHER PROTECTION
STAUNCHLY MADE AND
REINFORCED AT STRATEGIC POINTS

Sold at the best shops everywhere

any TIME GENTLEMEN PLEASE

Or, for that matter, any time a lady pleases. All you have to do is to set the "Radiotime" like an alarm clock and it switches itself on, and off, at any desired time. It will even wake you to music! In fact, the A33 combines the duties of automatic programme selector, electric clock and alarm, all in one radio receiver . . . for the modest sum of twenty-three guineas! Ask the nearest Ekco

Dealer to show you how it works.



EKCO

Radiotime

SWITCHES ITSELF ON AND OFF

EKCO "Radiotime" MODEL A33 — Superb modern styling, quality radio allied to an automatic tuning mechanism. Select your programme, or the time you want to get up and the A33 will switch itself on . . . and off again when you wish. For 50-cycle time-controlled AC mains.

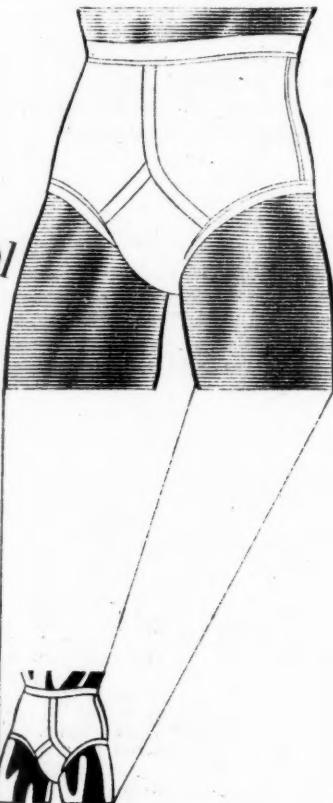
PRICE: 23 guineas, including tax.

E. K. COLE LTD



SOUTHEND-ON-SEA

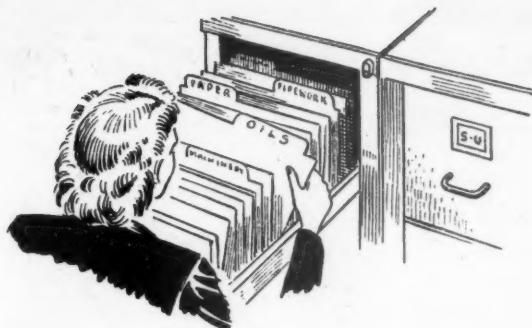
See this symbol



It's the sign of a good man's shop — a Coopers Y-front stockist. He may not always have Coopers Y-front underwear in stock, but what supplies there are go to him. Ask whenever you see this display piece — You'll probably be lucky the first time.

Coopers
Y-FRONT
underwear

British Patent No. 479119
LYLE & SCOTT LTD., IDEAL HOUSE, ARGYLL ST., LONDON, W.1 & HAWICK, SCOTLAND



Are we just filed away?

It's always a pleasure to appear on the purchase index. But we are not content to be just filed away, waiting for that next enquiry. With your co-operation we can survey your plant and offer practical suggestions for better lubrication—how to avoid duplication of grades or evolve for you a foolproof oil maintenance scheme. Our sales staff are technically minded fellows who have the data at their finger-tips and service every gallon of oil sold. And that measure of attention is not reserved for a steel-rolling mill or a large laundry—the smaller concern receives just the same service.

INDUSTRIAL LUBRICATION BY

FLETCHER MILLER

FLETCHER MILLER LTD. HYDE NEAR MANCHESTER

CFSI



"It's easier to do
business with a man
than an address!"



Sydney last month, Johannesburg last week . . . New York next week! As my firm's export manager, I find it pays to do business with a man and not just an address. Correspondence is cut to the bone, misunderstandings are prevented, problems are solved on the spot. That's where Speedbird service and B.O.A.C.'s more than 72,000 miles of world-wide routes come in. B.O.A.C. usually flies where I want to go, and Speedbird service gets me or my freight there in a hurry and on schedule. Arranging my trips is easy—I leave everything to my local B.O.A.C. Appointed Agent. About the actual flight—it's good, *really* good. Everything from the prompt, courteous attention to the complimentary meals reflects B.O.A.C.'s 30-year-old tradition of Speedbird service and experience.

B.O.A.C. TAKES GOOD CARE OF YOU

FLY BY B.O.A.C.

BRITISH OVERSEAS AIRWAYS CORPORATION WITH QANTAS EMPIRE AIRWAYS, SOUTH AFRICAN AIRWAYS, TASMAN EMPIRE AIRWAYS LTD.



Sir Isaac Newton,

who has been described as the greatest man of science of all time, is best known, to the general public, for his famous observation of the falling apple. This led him to formulate his Laws of Motion, the fundamental laws on which the branch of mathematical physics known as dynamics is based.

His achievements in optics and mathematics have obscured his work as a chemist. Newton's contact with chemistry began when he was at school in Grantham, where he lodged with an apothecary. Throughout his life he displayed great interest in the chemistry of metals, much of his work being of a very practical nature, such as the production of alloys for use on the mirrors of the reflecting telescope he designed.

Newton maintained a private chemical laboratory at Trinity College, Cambridge. His principal service to chemistry was his clarification of the "corpuscular" theory of matter. This theory, which held that matter consisted of large numbers of small particles, was applied by Newton to explain the facts he observed while experimenting. Newton was born at Woolsthorpe, near Grantham, on Christmas Day, 1642. Entering Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1661, he became Professor of Mathematics in the University at the very early age of twenty-seven. He was appointed Warden of the Royal Mint in 1696, and Master three years later. This great Englishman died in 1727, leaving behind him a reputation which has increased with the passing of the centuries.



Good thing

I look after him!

Always rushing! . . . Still
he isn't nearly so fagged
out nowadays . . . stopped getting
those awful colds, too . . . Well,
they say there's more fat
and vitamins in cod liver oil

than butter . . . Glad I've got him
into the way of taking that SevenSeas!

*Is anyone overworked or run-down in
your household? Wouldn't it set your mind at rest
to know that they were taking SevenSeas?*

SEVENSEAS

PURE COD LIVER OIL

Obtainable from all chemists, oil from 1/6
capsules once more in plentiful supply, from 1/9



CRITTALL WINDOWS



HOT-DIP GALVANIZED WINDOWS
OF VARIOUS TYPES ARE SPECIALLY
MADE FOR SCHOOLS & HOSPITALS

THE CRITTALL MANUFACTURING CO. LTD.
BRAINTREE ENGLAND

*STUNNING
SOUP*



**- Mummy makes it
with MARMITE**

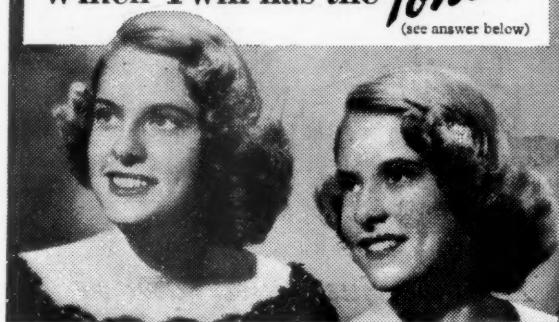
Wonderful Mother, producing a tasty nourishing meal every single day of the week ! How does she do it ? Well, one of her secrets is Marmite. A mere spot of Marmite adds tang and tastiness to all kinds of savoury cooking. And that's not all ! It adds vitamins too, those vitamins of the B₂ group which are essential for Children's health.

1 oz. 8d. • 2 oz. 1/- • 4 oz. 2/- • 8 oz. 3/- • 16 oz. 5/9



Which Twin has the *Toni*?

(see answer below)



One Perm was expensive . . . the *Toni* only 16/8

Have you tried *Toni*—the Home Perm used by more than 20,000,000 American women ? So smooth, so soft—so easy to do at home after a careful reading of the instructions. *Toni* waves any hair that will take a perm, and lasts just as long as the

most expensive perm. Waving time ranges from 1 to 3 hours,

and you're free to do what you like while the wave is "taking".

Which Twin has the *Toni*?

Alva Anderson, the *Toni* twin, is on the right. "My *Toni* was beautifully soft and natural-looking the very first day," reports Alva.

Remember! The De Luxe Kit contains re-usable plastic curlers that can be used over and over again with the Refill Kit—costing only 8/4 (incl. tax).

GIVE YOURSELF A LOVELY



Toni

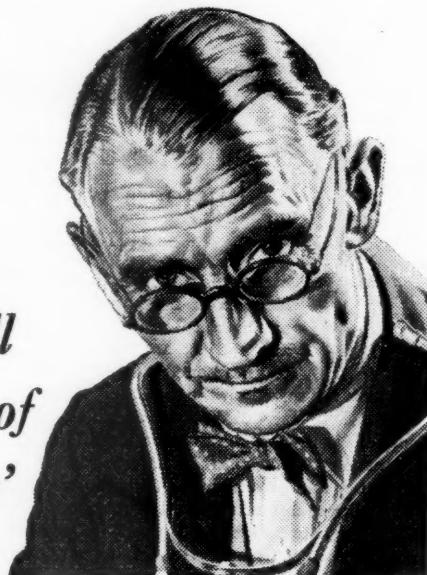
HOME PERMANENT

the crème cold wave

278

MADE BY THE TONI DIVISION OF GILLETTE, ISLEWORTH, MIDDX.

*'I see
my full
share of
misery'*



"Illness so often has its roots in unhappiness and personal troubles. Problems like that are never easy to solve, but more than once I've found that The Salvation Army can lend a hand."

**where there's need — there's The
SALVATION ARMY**

GIFTS PLEASE TO:
GENERAL ALBERT ORSBORN, C.B.E., 101, QUEEN VICTORIA STREET, LONDON, E.C.4.



Vol. CCXVI No. 5645

PUNCY

OR
THE LONDON CHARIVARI



February 16 1949

Charivaria

"ENTERTAINMENT must be provided for the thousands of American tourists visiting this country in the summer," says a writer. Star music-hall acts will cross the Atlantic ahead of the main body.

A horticulturist points out that very little rhubarb is forced in this country nowadays. We should prefer, in any case, to call it "directed."



"SOLOIST DROWNED BY BASS"
"Nottingham Evening News."
Advt.?

A professor who is making a study of fish and their habits assures us that there is a lot of thieving, assaulting and killing going on every day in the sea. It's just one crime wave after another.

"Forty years ago, as a very small child, I used to travel to school by train, all by myself, learning my A B C," says a correspondent. He was far too young of course for Bradshaw.

"Mr. Strauss said the Royal Observatory was the work of Sir Christopher Wren, and ought not a first-rate architect to have been employed from the beginning?"—*"The Times."*

Why drag that up now?

"It is a very different thing to be present during the actual broadcast of a radio programme," says a correspondent. For one thing, you can't switch it off.



A man who fell down a manhole in the pavement woke up in hospital. He was a good deal surprised, because his last conscious thought had been that he might be entering a night club.

No Guessing

"The address to which patient left should be left blank if the patient has died."—*M.O.H. hospital index card.*

Until the Government establishes a Ministry of Housing it can only keep half a Nye on houses and half a Nye on health.

A housewife who found a bowler-hat in her coal ration is sending it to the National Coal Board. She couldn't be expected to know that all the members have spares.



A man who left a leg of mutton in a taxi was able to give the police a satisfactory explanation of how he obtained it. Apparently the driver had forgotten to put his glove over the clock.

HABIT-FORMING DRUGS
EXCESSIVE CONSUMPTION REVIEWED BY W.H.O.
By W.H.O.M., please.

It is officially stated that there is no yak meat on sale in this country. This may convince housewives that, whatever it is, it isn't yak.

Determination

IT is not good to face the grey,
The insufferable insolence of the day
That stares into my window pane
With anger and disdain.

I know the rime is on the clod,
I know the path that must be trod
By the dull foolish throng,
But I am strong.

Already on their tedious round
By soul-destroying customs bound
The weaklings creep
Like a great lot of sheep.

But strong men are not touched by these,
They are like gnarled and rooted trees
No gust can shake,
They are like Francis Drake.

They know the moment and the chance,
When to withdraw and when advance
And seize the prize;
Then they arise.

A thousand times the fool hath said
"Late! late!" and leaping from his bed
Increased by his naught worth
The folly of this earth.

But little from his deep redoubt
The man of iron strength looks out
To hear the door's knock or be told
The coffee will be cold.

He knows the plan, the plot, the scheme,
And in that hour when his good dream
Fruition hath,
He takes his bath.

He knows when, peradventure, has begun
The first frail penetration of the sun,
Or if it be not there,
What overcoat to wear.

I shall remain unmoved until the Spring
With warmer airs the daffodil doth bring,
Or June the buttercup,
And then I may get up.

EVOE.

News Item

THREE was a piece in the paper, Thursday:
"Two girls walking in King's Park, Edinburgh, saw
a crocodile in a pond and screamed. Passers-by found
the crocodile was dead. It was taken to the university."

I blame the Government for this, and said as much to
old Walters who comes here at his convenience to set the
boiler to rights.

"There's some," he said, "naming no names, and no
offence given, would blame the Government for their own
noses." He read the cutting through again, turned it over
to look at the back, and laid it down on top of the stove.
"What would a gentleman like Mr. Attlee," he asked,
"want with a dead crocodile?"

I said he had misunderstood me. It had never crossed
my mind to connect the Prime Minister directly with the
incident, nor indeed any member of his Cabinet. What I
blamed them for was their restrictive newsprint policy,
which compelled the papers to give such miserably in-
adequate accounts of what was happening up and down the
country. "Look at it again," I said. "It doesn't make
sense."

He looked at it again, contracting his brows.

"Seems straight enough," he said. "Nobody hurt or
that. 'Twas a dead un, see?"

"How does a dead crocodile get into a pond in King's
Park, Edinburgh?"

"Ah," he said. "Now that I can't say, being a southerner
all me life."

"Yes," I said; "but a crocodile in a pond in a park?
How did it get there?"

He took up an enormous wrench and seized a portion of
piping. "Walked," he said, "likely."

"But it was dead."

"Mebbe so," he said, twisting violently. "Mebbe not.
Might of died in th' water. Gotter go some day, even crocs."

"Then it should have said so."

The eyebrows he turned upon me registered such con-
temptuous amazement that I went on hurriedly, "I mean
the paper should have said so. Anyway, alive or dead,
where did it come from?"

"That we don't know," he explained, "being we aren't
told." He seemed perfectly happy to leave it at that.
His attitude implied that it was no business of ours to go
prying into matters with which we had no concern.

"Passers-by," I said after a while, "found the crocodile
was dead. How do you suppose they did that?"

The screw joint he was working at gave suddenly and a
shower of plaster rattled down from the place where the
pipe disappears into the wall.

"Poked it," he said. "That's worked loose."

"It's been loose for years," I said. "If you saw a crocodile
in a pond would you go up and poke it?"

"Mebbe," he said indifferently. "It was dead, see."

"I know it was. But you wouldn't know it was dead
until you poked it, would you?"

"That's right," he said.

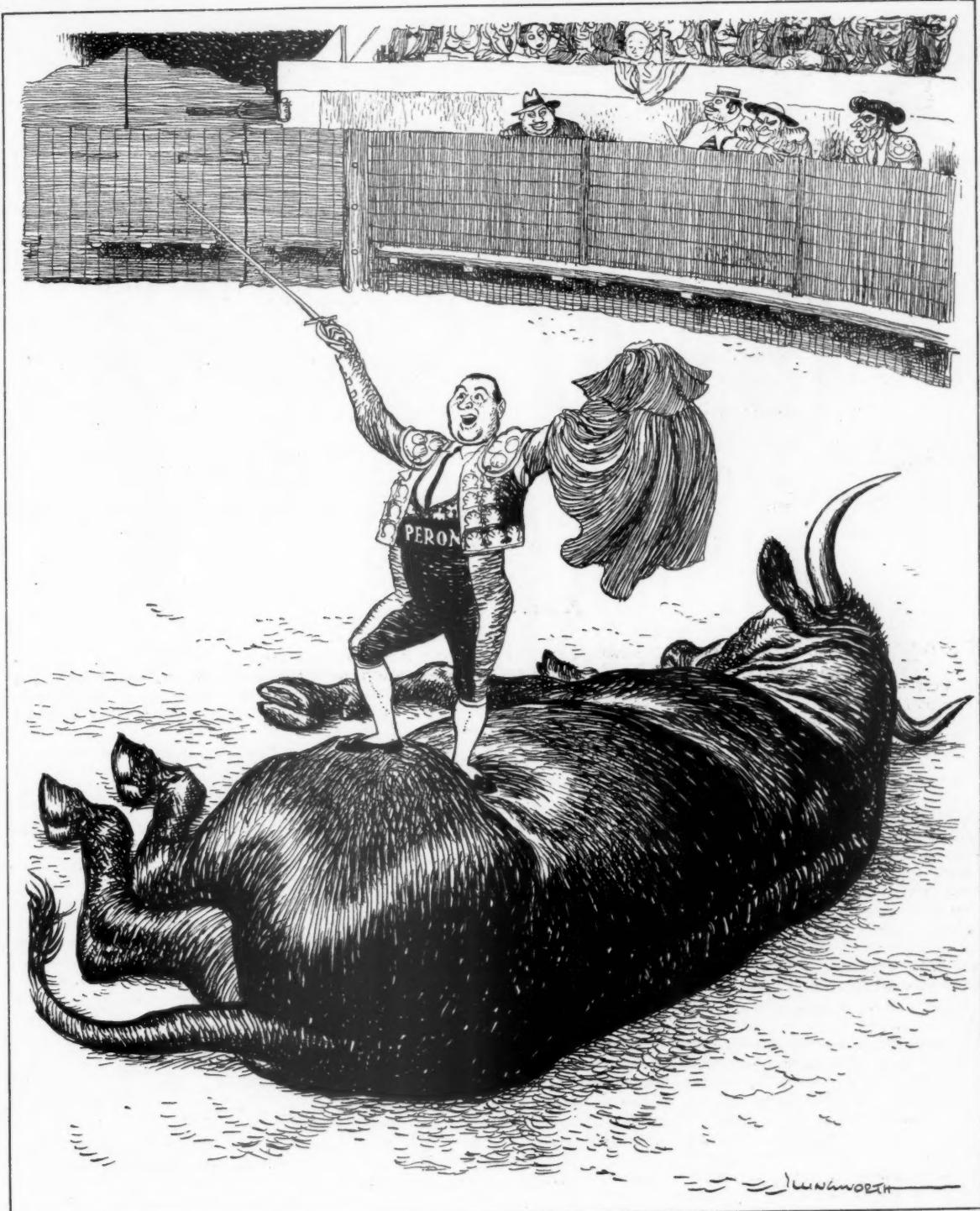
I began to feel baffled by the man's stupidity. "Look,"
I said. "Even if you took the risk of going close enough
to poke it, what good would that do? You couldn't be
certain it was dead, just because it didn't move. Crocodiles
often stay quite still for hours."

"Tut!" he said, though whether at the immobility of
crocodiles or at the state of the pipe he was peering down
one couldn't say.

"Of course," I went on, "you could hold a looking-glass
in front of its mouth, or shine a torch into its eye to see
whether it blinked."

"Act o' folly," he said shortly; "not if it wasn't dead,
that would be."

Irony is wasted, I see now, on men who come to set



THE ARGENTINE MATADOR

"What you bid for Old England's Rosbif?"



"If you'd care to wait for a bit of a lull, sir, I'll give you a demonstration."

boilers to rights. For two pins I would have dropped the whole subject, only there is something challenging about the dumb passivity with which people accept the driblets of raving nonsense the newspapers dish out to them nowadays. I desperately wanted to get this silly old man to realize that something at least remained unexplained in the story of the dead crocodile.

"Why take it to the university, then?" I demanded.

He turned the piece of piping over and over in his hands in a dumbfounded kind of way.

"The crocodile," I said. "It was taken to the university. Why?"

I confess that this is to me the most staggering feature of the whole inexplicable business. What reasoning prompts a group of passers-by with a dead crocodile unexpectedly on their hands to take it to the university? I know that education takes pride of place in the life of Scotland, but even so—what would the Principal say?

Mr. Walters found no stumbling-block here. "They'd know what was best," he said, "likely. Glad to be rid of it, come to that. Look at yer corrosion."

"They were put in during the war. Then I take it, Mr. Walters," I said, making a final effort, "that if you find a dead crocodile in your garden when you get home you'll have no hesitation in sending it to the university? Just as if it were your own son," I added bitterly.

He considered it, rubbing rust off his palms on to the front of his overalls.

"I know what I'd not do," he said at last, "naming no names. I'd not blame a gentleman like Mr. Attlee for it, alive or dead." He took up the wrench again, still muttering. I thought I caught the words "Silly old earease."

I thought it best to leave him to get on with his work. He seemed to have taken quite a dislike to this poor old crocodile.

H. F. E.

History Deletes Itself.

[It now seems doubtful whether King Charles the First stepped out to his death from the window of the Palace of Whitehall, as stated on the bronze plaque on that building.]

THE "Facts" that fill History's pages,
On which, as a rock, was our stand,
Are constantly being exploded
By scholarship's merciless hand.

And History's cyclical effort
To repeat itself's surely absurd,
Since much is increasingly doubtful
And some of it never occurred.

A Battle Long Ago

"Ah, don't talk to me about war," said Rattigan. "Haven't I seen more war than was ever prophesied in the Bible? Not that there weren't great wars prophesied. But I seen more."

"Have you really?" said the traveller from England.

"Sure I have," said Rattigan.

"And what were your most interesting experiences?" asked the Englishman.

"I'll tell you," said Rattigan. "In August 1914 I joined up and was quartered in England. A fine regiment we were. A great regiment. But I needn't be telling you that. Sure I wouldn't have joined it if it wasn't. Well, after a while I gets a bit of leave, and back I goes to Ireland to see it again. And I was walking through Dublin in my uniform; and nothing showed off the figure I had in those days better nor that did. And I was walking along Nassau Street; and if it give people any pleasure to see me go by in my uniform, I saw no harm in letting them see it. And just as I passed Kildare Street, who should come out of the Kildare Street Club but a gentleman that I knew. Now, there were great gentlemen in those days, and nowhere in the world more than in Ireland, and this was one of them. And he says to me, 'How are you, Rattigan? I'm glad to see you.' And he puts his hand into his pocket and draws it out, and there was a five-pound note in it, and he gives it me. And, of course, I says I was glad to see him. And so I was. And, sure, I would have been, even without what he give me. And away I goes. And I wasn't ten yards from the club when I meets another gentleman. And, sure, he was a gentleman too, even if he wasn't a great one like the other. And he asks how I'm getting on, and he gives me a pound note. And away I goes with six pounds in my pocket, not counting all the odd shillings I had left over, out of my pay. What should I do now, I says? And I gets the idea that a drink wouldn't come amiss. And I goes into a pub and drinks the health of the two gentlemen. Sure, I couldn't have done less, considering what they had done for me. Well, I may have had one or two drinks more, I don't remember now. Sure, it was a long time ago. But I goes out of the pub and says what will I do next? And I says to myself, I says, 'Rattigan, I'll go and take Berlin.' Single-handed I meant to do it. And back I goes to the old battalion by the next boat, letting my

leave go to hell. And I walks into the officers' mess, where the colonel was sitting among his officers, and I says to them 'Boys, I'm going to take Berlin.' And they says 'Good luck to you, Rattigan.' And away I goes. We weren't camped very far from Dover, and soon I gets there; and I says to them down at the harbour 'Have you e'er a ship going to France?' And an officer says to me 'Don't you see that there's one alongside, and just starting? Hop on board.' And I did as he says. And the ship goes off, and we soon lands in France. And I fixes my bayonet and goes up to the line. And there I finds a battalion, and they says 'Are you coming to join us?' 'I am not,' I says. 'You're too slow. I am going to take Berlin.' And they all wishes me good luck, and I goes on with my bayonet. And very soon I comes to the German trench, that was on the other side of no-man's-land. And I says to the Germans there 'Stand out of the way. You are only Germans,' I says to them.

"And the sun comes out about then from behind a cloud and shines very wicked-looking along my bayonet, and they stands out of my way as I said. And on I goes. And I sees reserves and ammunition columns, and here and there a general. But if the boys in the trench weren't able to stop me, none of those lads could. And the sun goes on shining on my bayonet, and on I goes. Begob, I could march in those days. I don't know what distance clever men say it is from France to Berlin; but, begob, I did it in a day; or a day and a bit of a night. And there was Berlin before me with all its lights shining. They didn't have any of this black-out that they talk about in those days: it was all shining before me in the night, with thousands of lamps and windows. And I goes on to take it with my bayonet. And suddenly I hears behind me on the road a great noise of a horse galloping. And on it came banging and clattering, till it draws level with me and pulls up, and I sees its head above me, a huge great charger, the biggest that ever you saw, and on it General Haig. And he says to me 'What are you doing, Rattigan?' And I says to him 'I am going to take Berlin, sir.' And the General doesn't say anything. And I says to him 'Isn't that right, sir?' And he says to me 'I wouldn't say it was wrong. At the same time, amn't I commander-in-chief?' 'So you are, sir,' I says, 'and none better.' 'Well, then,' he says, 'won't people be looking for me to take Berlin?' And

would it look well for a private soldier to be taking it, when I have all the plans made for to do it myself?' 'Sure it would not, sir,' I said. For I had to admit he was right. 'Well, then,' he says, 'Rattigan, hadn't you better go back and leave it to me?' And he gives me the order 'About turn.' Which of course I obeyed. And then he goes on 'Form fours. Quick march,' not being accustomed to give orders to only one man, with all the millions he used to command. And I obeys him as well as I can.

"And I goes back the way that I came. And I says to any Germans I met 'You can have Berlin for a little longer.' And they none of them stopped me on my way back. Why would they, when they hadn't stopped me going to take Berlin?

"And sure enough the General had the plans, and grand plans they were. He'd have taken Berlin and no stopping him, only that the politicians stepped in and they made an armistice. So back I goes to the old battalion and reports for duty, though I had a terrible headache, whatever damned thing was the cause of it. Maybe it was something I'd eaten. But devil a know I know."

D.



At the Pictures

The Passionate Friends—Eureka Stockade—The Glass Mountain—The Paleface

NOBODY knowing both could help comparing *The Passionate Friends* (Director: DAVID LEAN) with the same director's *Brief Encounter*, to the disadvantage of the newer film. Both are

cutting-short of the reverie in the car, the interruption of a silence by the clicking of a tape-machine, the wonderfully effective moment when ANN TODD, after speaking softly, suddenly strengthens her voice for the final words. Perhaps what dulls the whole film's impression is nothing more than one's memory of *Brief Encounter*.



[*The Passionate Friends*]

DEAREST FOES

Howard Justin . . . CLAUDE RAINS
Stephen Stratton . . . TREVOR HOWARD

stories of a wife's innocent extramarital love affair, in both the "other man" is TREVOR HOWARD; but *Brief Encounter* was both simpler in plan (one long flashback, as against an uneasy juggling with two telescoped together) and somehow more interesting in detail. I don't know the H. G. Wells novel on which *The Passionate Friends* is based, though I gather the sociological point of it has been ignored, with the period of the original story (we are in 1939 or 1948, and not always quite sure which); perhaps it is responsible for a certain artificial air these characters have, however well played. Or it may be the stifling influence of high life: the husband (CLAUDE RAINS) is a banker, an important banker, and his opulent circumstances seem little different from those we are quite used to on the screen. The best of the picture is in the camera-work, and in isolated brief scenes and devices: the play of light, shadow, sound and movement in the ball at the Albert Hall, the sharp

cutting-short of the reverie in the car, the interruption of a silence by the clicking of a tape-machine, the wonderfully effective moment when ANN TODD, after speaking softly, suddenly strengthens her voice for the final words. Perhaps what dulls the whole film's impression is nothing more than one's memory of *Brief Encounter*.

DULCIE GRAY are the husband and wife and the lovely VALENTINA CORTESE is the unsettling influence; there is some fine singing by TITO GOBBI, and some fine Italian mountain scenery. Most of the young composer's music sounded to me like the Warsaw-Concerto kind of stuff that results from the elaborate orchestration of minor-key doodling on the piano.

I didn't notice the usual reference to Bing Crosby in BOB HOPE's new picture *The Paleface* (Director: NORMAN Z. MCLEOD); whether it was deliberately omitted I don't know, but it may have been, for there are other signs that too much regard was paid to the logical development of plot, Technicolor pictorial interest, scenic grandeur and spectacle and a few other style-cramping things of that kind. This may seem an odd complaint to make about a piece punctuated with moments of lunacy, at the end of which Mr. HOPE looks into the eye of the camera and addresses the audience; but for my taste it isn't lunatic enough, and among its burlesque of "Western" conventions offers too much apparently meant to be taken seriously. JANE ("The Outlaw") RUSSELL seems to take it all very seriously indeed, even the song "Buttons and Bows"—which, perhaps (like you), she had heard before.

R. M.



[*Eureka Stockade*]

OUR POLICEMEN WERE WONDERFUL.
A Constable, 1853 ANONYMOUS

The Evening Institute's Progress

(Report from the Clerk to the Governors)

1. I have to report that the students enrolled for the new session are as follows:—

Arithmetic 3, Science 1, French 5, Physical Training 4, Cookery (rations provided) 38, Ballroom Dancing 182, History 0, Geography 0, English 525.

2. The average age of the students enrolled for all subjects other than English is 16½. In English it is 42·7.

3. All students reside locally, except in the case of those taking English. They come from all over the country.

4. I do not think that there is any need for me to comment on the number of students in the various classes, but since the Governors have expressed surprise at the considerable daily increase in the number of students taking English, and the large number of cars outside the Evening Institute on all nights of the week, I will attempt to explain the success which has attended the reorganization of the English syllabus.

5. In previous years there has been only spasmodic enrolment for this subject. Perhaps five or six students have enrolled, never more, and the syllabus taught has followed the requirements of the Matriculation examination. Unfortunately there have never been any successes in the examination, for the class which met on Tuesdays was disbanded after a few weeks.

6. This year a new teacher was appointed. He has scrapped the entire syllabus and is teaching letter writing only. Within one month students flocked to his class in such numbers that it was necessary to form one on each night of the week.

7. On Monday nights the largest class meets. This is devoted entirely to the writing of letters to the Regional Petroleum Officer. Apparently the students state their cases and the teacher writes the details on the blackboard. Then the students each write a specimen letter. These are then read out and criticized by the teacher. His criticism is frank and I think rather embarrassing. However, he does not appear to offend them, even when he is rather scornful. He then writes his letter on the blackboard next to the one on which the applicant's details are written. This done, he invites criticism. From my observation, admiration is the only response. Another student then states his case, only to be told that a bare statement is needed. It



"I'm not so stupid as you might think, old boy—if I'd allowed her her hearts I'd have had to get the coffee."

appears that some of the students give their cases with warmth and indignation, and have to be reminded that it is certainly not the fault of the teacher that the original application was refused. The same procedure is followed, the details being entered on one blackboard and the final application on the other.

8. Two nights are devoted to applications for licences to acquire materials in short supply. This class appears to be composed of students in need of wood for sheds or garages, etc. The technique of the teacher is slightly varied, but the atmosphere of intense interest is maintained.

9. To me, what is of greatest interest is the fact that the students continue to come weeks after their application has been vetted and finally approved by the teacher. Naturally it takes some weeks before the result of

the application is known, but they attend each week after that.

10. From inquiries I have made it appears that a strong bond of friendship quickly springs up among these students, and they tend to look upon the class more in the nature of a club. The letter drawn up by them and approved by the teacher was sent to the local Food Office, and they have a canteen second to none.

Yours faithfully,
M. JONES.

• •

Water-Power

How hideously the outraged haunts of
Pan
Are desecrated by the works of man!
No plea of progress makes me reconciled
To cast-iron piping down the valleys
wild.
W. K. H.



"But you can hardly expect the Health Service to pay for it if you really DO intend to use it as a weed-killer."

Still More Impressions

THINK we might start to-day with something about the impressions made by different sounds; for example, shop-bells. Only those who live in shops can tell the effect on the character of the same little bell ringing every time the door opens, but it may be assumed that in a shop where the bell is fixed to a strip of quivering metal and left to jingle until it runs down, the people behind the counter think the customer's upward look of humorous concern just a shade egotistical. The other kind of bell, a ting, needs a busy day and the usual scuffle of courtesy on the doormat for its full scope, and is altogether less whimsical; but both kinds, along with the telephone-bell that rings out of sight in sub-post-offices, make their contributions to the atmosphere of life. Another characteristic shop-sound is the one shopkeepers make when they disappear to fetch something they may not have; it is best described as the noise of cardboard boxes in the dark (there may be a light on, but customers have a very subjective idea of the bits of a shop that they can't see) and reaches real tension if you hear voices. I think I am right in saying that most customers waiting for something scarce like their favourite marmalade tend to shut their ears to any spoken forecasts and to consider the hunting among the boxes a hopeful sign in itself.

The impression made by a squeaky door is well-known—a mixture of squeak, annoyance and preventability—and what I want to concentrate on is not the squeaking

but the oiling process. This consists of getting out the oil-can, blobbing a trial drop on your hand and swinging the door to see where the squeak is. It is not important to know this, because both hinges are going to get absolutely covered with oil, nor is it possible to find out; it is just an acknowledgment of one of life's smaller mysteries. After the oiling the squeak will narrow itself down to the top or the bottom, which shows what a lot was happening before, and the moment when the last squeak is silenced—by putting oil on a bit that has plenty already—is one of humanity's triumphs of achievement, spoilt only by the way no one ever seems to notice the difference. This being a rather practical paragraph, I shall include in it the process of piano-dusting, which is nothing less than a sound-picture of efficiency, with the music, brisk though it is, ill befitting the state of mind producing it.

MY readers will have noticed that they are remarkably clever at identifying footsteps—almost uncannily so—and that if they are listening for a particular footprint they will recognize it when it does approach as far more like what they were expecting than all the other footsteps which in the past ten minutes have turned out to belong to other people. There is in the footprint world a slight pause between the footsteps stopping and the latch-key being clicked into the door which is in itself as characteristic a sound as any silence can be. Talking of front doors and characteristic sounds reminds me to remind my readers of the way people bang at back doors. Long years of having to bang to get heard have given them a uniform technique, an onslaught with at least the mental effect of a yodel, and as likely as not the result of having had no luck with the first two bangs.

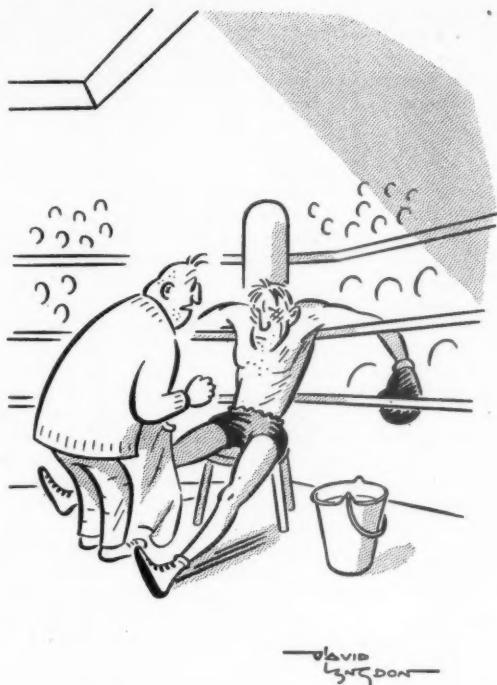
I don't think I can say anything about the cooing noises made by wood-pigeons that has not been said before, but little attention has so far been paid to another almost equally purring sound, the one that hens make. It is the quietest noise they know, and might in any other bird be defined as thinking aloud. Of the many bird-sounds remaining for me to be poetic about I shall choose the one which ignorant people can do no more than narrow down to either a thrush or a blackbird, and which on a spring evening (which for practical purposes is any evening you hear it) can produce a wave of nostalgic reminiscence in people who haven't the least idea what they are being reminded of.

I HAD not meant this article to be entirely devoted to sound, and I shall end with a visual impression: the effect that photographs of ourselves have on us. My readers may to the outside world present what they themselves consider an unnecessarily low opinion of their looks, talents, character and achievements, but I think it perfectly safe to say that they are all conceited enough to make the unwrapping of six huge photographs of their own face one of life's moments; and that when they have had a good look—near to, far off, upside down, and so on (many of my readers' photographed faces look well upside down)—they need only put the envelope away for an hour or so before they find themselves taking it out again with an interest absolutely unaffected by knowing exactly what they are going to see.

ANDE.

Allowing for the Traffic Lights

"The chase went on for three miles at speeds varying between 0 and 60 mph."—Evening paper.



"May I make a suggestion?"

Unsporting Notes from Paris

I HAVE often tried to improve my French by reading Paris newspapers at Mme. Boulot's. But we are a friendly crowd there, and to hide Britannically behind a paper is to jeopardize the *entente* that I have so carefully built up over many months.

And so, some time ago, I took my *Figaro* to a *bistro* in a distant *arrondissement* and settled down behind it, secure in my incognito, to read about vetoes, committees, sub-committees and more vetoes at the Palais de Chaillot. It was strong, vivid stuff: full of subjunctives and past conditionals—very edifying.

On the same page was the report of a football match between the Racing Club de France and a team from the Midi, which seemed to have resulted in a sweeping victory for the Midi club. They had, it appeared, marked seven *but*s to zero. If *but* meant "goal," that was quite a lot of goals.

I was well into the third column of a speech by one of the Ukrainian delegates, who as far as I could gather associated himself pretty closely with something M. Vyshinsky had said four columns earlier, when a voice behind me said "Assassins!"

I looked round. The waiter, breathing heavily over my shoulder, was studying the paper. The term struck me as rather strong, even when applied to a Ukrainian delegate, and I said "Do you not think that the Marshall Plan . . ."

The waiter had vanished. He reappeared a minute later with the wine-waiter. They gazed sombrely at my newspaper.

"Bandits!" said the wine-waiter. This was a little more restrained than "assassins," but when the head-waiter joined the party and, after a brief survey of the offending

page, said "Group of murderers!" I felt it was time to make a mild protest on behalf of the United Nations.

"Gentlemen," I said, "one must remind oneself that these individuals are without doubt little instructed. They do their possible, but they lack finesse." I sat back, rather pleased with my construction of a fairly difficult sentence.

"Monsieur," said the head-waiter, his voice vibrant with emotion, "you cannot instruct savages."

Well, I thought, I suppose that's fair enough. To a race that has produced types like Richelieu, the brothers Cambon, Clemenceau—one could name others—these goings-on at the Palais de Chaillot must rather resemble school debating societies, or the French equivalent. But still . . .

"One should perhaps not take too seriously what he said about the atomic bomb," I said.

The head-waiter looked puzzled.

"The atomic bomb, monsieur?" He peered at my paper. "One perceives no mention of this."

I pointed to a lurid bit of invective from the Ukraine.

"Oh, that," said the head-waiter. "That is a bagatelle. But regard here." With trembling finger he indicated a paragraph describing how the Midi centre-half had deliberately kicked the Racing Club inside-left in the face while the latter was on the ground. The account went on to say that the referee had passed a quiet night, but was not yet out of danger.

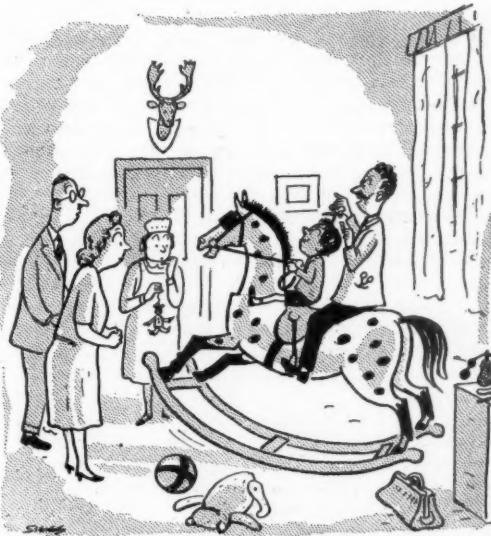
"Is this the sport, monsieur?" asked the head-waiter tearfully. "To kick a man when he has gained possession of the ball, yes. That understands itself. But to kick him on the ground—that is a little exaggerated." He tore up my *Figaro* with quiet deliberation.

"This is a sombre history," I said. "One can but console oneself with the reflection that civilization extends no farther south than Fontainebleau—certainly not to the Midi."

The head-waiter dried his eyes and looked at me with approval.

"Vive le Black'eath," he said.

"Vive le Racing Club," I replied.



"This isn't getting us anywhere, sir."

A Nation of Shop-Walkers

"AND what's more," said Strewth, "I can prove it!" He took a folded sheet of paper from an inside pocket, placed it on the counter between two pools of beer and lowered his head to within six inches of it. As his eyes traversed the columns of figures he beckoned us with hooked finger. We gathered round.

"There!" he said, "What'd I tell you, 49,000 confectioners for a start!"

(I see no reason why I should explain how and why the conversation had degenerated to this level: there was certainly no attempt to explain things to me when I joined the group at precisely this stage of the proceedings.)

"So what?" said Cobham. "That proves nothing, nothing whatever."

"If there are 49,000 confectioners in Britain," said Strewth, "it means there's roughly one sweet-shop to every thousand inhabitants, doesn't it? That's one to every 250 families and—"

"Talk about a ready-reckoner!" said Joy.

"Yes, do talk about a ready-reckoner," said Hobley quickly.

"Now the average family visits the sweet-shop twice a month," Strewth went on, "which makes 500 visits in all. That's about seventeen visits a day. Seventeen visits a day! Five minutes for each visit—and that's a generous estimate—gives us one and a half hours of work a day. And the shop's open for eight hours! Now, d'you see?"

Strewth picked up the paper and swept it round in a semi-circle bounded by waistcoat buttons.

"There may be a bit of waste in the distribution of sweets," said Hobley, "but that's due to rationing and shortages. It doesn't make us a nation of shopkeepers, though. Why, you might just as well say that the War Minister is a useless extravagance while the country's involved in peace."

"Besides," said Joy, "most sweet-shops have bells on their doors."

Strewth laughed at this, but his cackle was mirthless—an obvious imitation of something he'd heard on the radio. Joy waited patiently, his eyes fixed on the ceiling.

"What's that got to do with it?" said Cobham, irritably.

"Shops are of three kinds," said Joy, "shops with no doors—like kiosks and arcades—shops with doors without bells, and shops with doors *and* bells. Shops with bells on their doors are part-time shops run by housewives who

spend three-quarters of their time doing essential work in the back premises. No waste there."

"Very well," said Strewth, "I'll give you confectionery and turn to . . . lending-libraries . . . no, hairdressing. Yes, hairdressing! How long does it take to get a hair-cut?"

There was a chorus of weak jokes and personal jibes. Finally we agreed on twenty minutes as a reasonable mean of our estimates.

"Right," said Strewth, "there are 22,700 hairdressing establishments in the country, or roughly one to every thousand males. Now if every man and boy has a trim once a month and each trim takes twenty minutes it means that approximately—er—330 man-hours of service are required. See what I mean?"

"Go on," we said.

"Well, if two people run the shop—there's always one to slosh the stuff on and another to scrape it off—they are together capable of 480 man-hours a month. If they do only 330 hours, 150 hours must be wasted. Q.E.D."

"Aren't you forgetting that the barber needs time for reading and research?" said Cobham.

"They talk far too much," said Strewth.

"Be fair," said Hobley. "The customer can't talk when he's in the chair, and Nature abhors a vacuum, so the barber *has* to talk. I feel sorry for barbers. Nothing worse than talking to an unresponsive audience. Like trying to make a microphone laugh."

Hobley winked at the group. There were murmurs of approval and renewed calls for Harry the barman. I took advantage of the break to ask Chalmers what it was all about.

"It's Strewth," he said, "trying to make out we haven't really got full employment because, as he puts it, nearly a million Civil Servants and about two million distributors are on short time. We haven't got round to Whitehall yet; he's now trying to prove that most shopkeepers are redundant."

A few minutes later Strewth emerged from a new bout of computation with a smile of triumph.

"This is it!" said Cobham.

"There are some 7,700 oil and colourmen in Britain—" Strewth began.

Everybody laughed.

"All right then, let's make it newsagents, 28,750 of 'em, or butchers. There are 38,900 butchers."

"Make it butchers," we said.

"O.K. There's roughly one butcher for every 300 families."

"Horrible," said Joy, "horrible, horrible."

"So that butchers are idle for—"

"Wait a minute," said Cobham, "I think we've heard enough of this. What Strewth means is that if everybody would agree to visit his butcher and baker and hairdresser at a fixed time every week or month, no matter how inconvenient, and if the Government would agree to refund travelling expenses to those who had to make special shopping journeys, and if the B.B.C. would agree to co-operate effectively, then it might be possible to reduce the number of distributors."

"What's the B.B.C. to do with it?" said Joy.

"Well, they'd have to devote one whole programme to announcements from the various Ministries. People whose surnames begin with letters between G and M will attend their hairdressers' at the following times—and so on. It's frightful to contemplate."

"Imagine it," said Hobley. "You step into the ironmonger's and the assistant's standing there with a face as black as thunder. You're late again, he says, I shall have to report you to the Ministry."

"Or you find you can't get to the florist's at 9.25 this week," said Chalmers, "so you have to find somebody who'll exchange his appointment for yours."

"But you can't use the phone because your time for phoning is 5.50—6 o'clock, A.M., on Tuesdays," said Hobley.

"That's enough of that silly rot," said Strewth. "I'm off—anybody going my way?"

"What about the Civil Service?" said Cobham. "You haven't touched that yet."

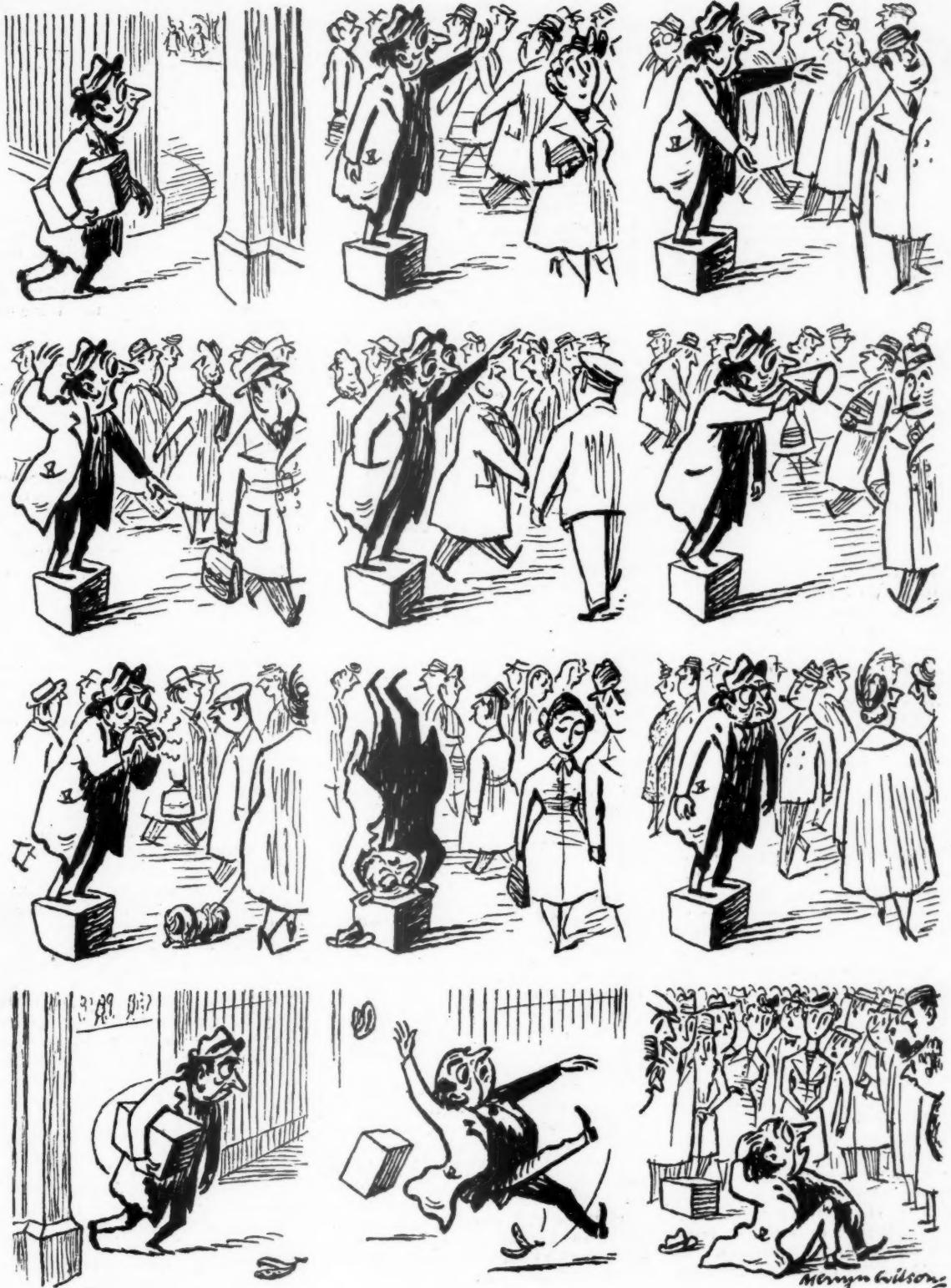
"Next time," said Strewth from the door.

"Next Thursday, then," shouted Hobley, "'Ts' to 'Zs' at 8.30 sharp." Hod.

• •

Good Resolutions

THE flood that began
The first of Jan.
Begins to ebb
Half-way through Feb.
And becomes a trickle
Long before Michael.





"Thought—yellow—bands—were—something—to—do—with
mustard—gas—attack—indicators."

For Noise's Sake

IT had been a stupendous lunch and my mellowness, on returning to the office at a quarter-past three, was indeed unparalleled. Bulging with the fat of several lands, I gently subsided into the chair. In a matter of seconds the left-hand half of the desk was cleared and the feet and legs provided with a pleasant resting-place.

The room, too, was deliciously warm.

From immediately across the passage arose the screams of the Ladies' Committee as they held their monthly conference. Occasionally these sounds would be joined, rather than interrupted, by the boom of the masculine chairman. They did not disturb me,

however. I had heard them so many times before.

As far as I was concerned all was peace. I threw back my head and allowed sleep's gentle waves to lap around me.

It was then that Miss Pryor came in with the afternoon's mail.

"Oh," she said as soon as she saw me, "I'm sorry. I didn't know . . ."

I looked at her reproachfully. "It's too late," I groaned. "The damage has been done." Slowly and painfully I removed my legs from the desk. My eyes felt as if they had been blocked with lumps of dough. "Well?" I asked. "And what is it now?"

"These for signature," said Miss Pryor, who has such matters under complete control, "these for action and this one for immediate action. It's Mr. Jameson," she explained.

"Oh," I said. Mr. Jameson is our General Manager.

"Will you deal with it now?"

For a moment I did not reply. My eyes had been fast closing. Then I said "No."

"No?"

"No." Miss Pryor is inclined to be a disciplinarian and I had to be firm. "No. Not just now. That is to say, in a minute. Put it in the In-tray."

"Shall I put them all in the In-tray?"

"Yes, Miss Pryor," I said patiently. "Put them all in the In-tray."

"Certainly." She turned to go. Already I was slipping forward in the chair and my right leg was half-way towards the desk-top. As she reached the door she paused.

"Did you see the parcel?" she asked.

I awoke with a jump. "Parcel?" I exclaimed. "What parcel?" I like parcels.

She pointed towards the corner by the window. "That one," she said. "The porter delivered it when you were at lunch." And with that she left me.

The parcel was large and square. For a moment I gazed at it mystified. No parcel had been expected, least of all one as big as this. Perhaps it was food. Kindly Rhodesians had obliged in the past, but never on quite such a magnificent scale. No doubt on this occasion a little drink had been added. Here was generosity indeed.

Quickly I cut the surrounding cord and tore aside the brown paper. A cardboard box was now unveiled from which straw, sawdust and paper shavings burst forth and erupted on to the carpet. Intrigued, I delved into its depths and at once my hand gripped something hard and metallic.

It was a bugle.

This was strange. No such instrument had been ordered by me, as far as I could remember. I delved farther, this time with both hands, and brought out two more bugles. Again I investigated, dipping into every part of the box. Wherever I went I found bugles.

Clearly the efficient Miss Pryor had failed to check the label—which, I now found, was addressed to the Young Lads' League, whose offices were immediately below my own. Doubtless this was a new consignment for their excellent brass bands.

Gloomily I began to tidy up the mess. All my lethargy had returned.

To postpone the necessity for further exertion, I picked up one of the bugles and examined it by the window.

It was a lovely instrument. I held it up, letting the sunlight dance on the shining metal. Then I removed the paper from its inside, tapped out the sawdust and held it up to the light again. Memories were sweeping over me—happy memories of the days when I had joined the school band in order to avoid having to carry a rifle at the annual inspection . . . of turbulent hours of practice in my study, and, later, in the chill of the fives-court . . . of military promotion resulting from an increased musicianship . . . memories, above all, of the glory of noise, beautiful noise, wonderful noise, noise for noise's sake, best but most easily forgotten of all young manhood's delights.

• •

I stood there by the window glowing. Across the passage the shrieks of the Ladies' Committee had redoubled in violence, but I scarcely heard them. They were as nothing, anyway, to the sounds I had once been able to produce from my little bugle. There was simply no comparison, no comparison at all. Or so it seemed to me to-day.

But perhaps I was wrong. Perhaps I was exaggerating. Perhaps . . .

A moment later the bugle was at my lips. I took a deep breath. A sickening, screeching banshee of a blast split the air and set the chandelier rocking in its socket.

Then everywhere there was silence. Followed by a babble of tongues and a clamour of footsteps.

But I didn't care. I was well content.

Cartilage

I HAVE slipped a cartilage.

When I have got it right I mean to take good care never to slip it again. My family and friends are too sympathetic.

"Cartilage!" said my brother-in-law. "By Jove, how that takes me back to Cambridge days! It was always slipping—just as I was getting on to a bike, stepping into a boat—anything might shove it out. I became quite adept at making it go back again with just one violent kick. That's what you should have done the moment you felt it go out."

I pointed out that I didn't, at that time, know anything about cartilages.

"No, I don't suppose you did. Well, I certainly knew all about mine . . ."

An old friend on whom we usually call at about 6.30 every Saturday evening said: "Cartilage, you poor girl. Don't I know how they can hurt! In my rugger-playing days I had the devil of a time with mine. In the end I had to have the wretched thing out—most unpleasant operation it was too. Here—your glass is empty . . ."

My husband had also been obliged to have his cartilage removed. Owing to the operation, which took place one summer, he missed getting his cricket blue for Oxford. I know this must be true because I have heard him say so several times, particularly during the last week.

Another friend who dines with us from time to time told us that there was nothing he didn't know about cartilages. By the time dinner came to an end we had very little difficulty in believing this.

Everybody seems most concerned about the future of my knee. On the 8.56 business train the whole carriage is kind enough to inquire tenderly each morning about its welfare from my husband.

"How's your wife getting on?" one of them asks.

My husband replies that the cartilage, which was manipulated by an osteopath, is, so far as we know, still in its correct place, and that the swelling is yielding slowly to kaolin poultices.

"Kaolin's no good at all," volunteers another kind inquirer.

"Tell Mary from me that lead lotion is the only thing. I found that out when I had cartilage trouble during the first world war. I'll tell you a funny story about that . . ."

Another business chap has another funny story about a friend of his getting a permanent skin trouble from too much poulticing. These funny stories, together with much compassionate advice, are relayed to me when my husband gets home each evening.

"Old B. sends you a message that you simply must try to keep your leg up every possible moment, otherwise you'll get adhesions and have endless trouble later on."

"Douglas says to bind it loosely is the best."

"Richard says don't on any account bind it. Let the blood flow."

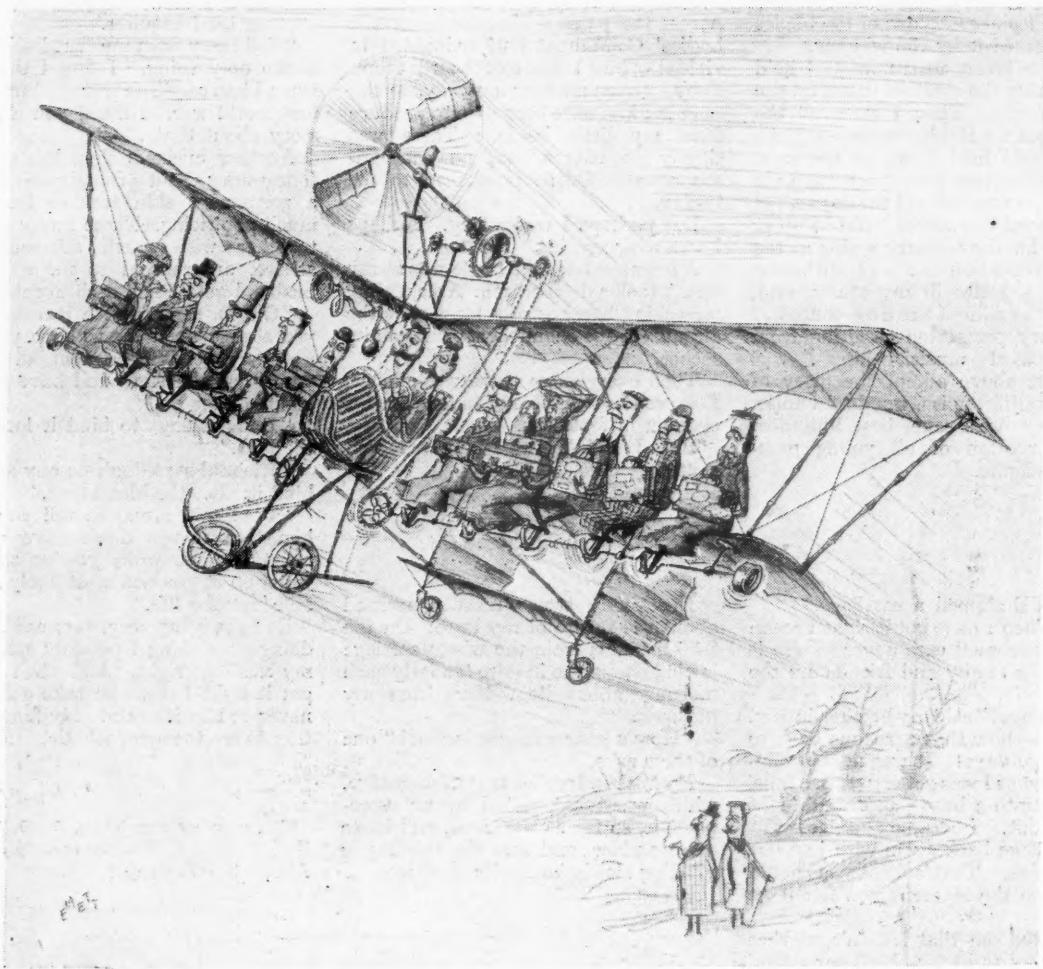
"Fred said I was to tell you from him that if you don't have regular massage now, while you've still got water on it, you will most likely have a stiff knee for life."

So I am being very, very careful and doing everything I possibly can to get my cartilage right. And when I have got it right I mean to take good care never to slip it again. My family and friends are too sympathetic. M. D.

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"WANTED BY THE YARD, 5,000 P.C.S."
Headline in daily paper.
About 10,000 yards?





"It's not a subsidized line, but somehow they seem to make quite a decent profit."

Half-Open Letter

(exposing Half-veiled Threat)

THE Third Programme, I always thought,
Was intended to teach us What we Ought
To Like, and How to Like It,
Its *motif* educational
Rather than recreational . . .
Well, wasn't it?
That premiss granted, it has occurred to me
That it is going to be
Very awkward for the B.B.C.

And its backroom boys
When
We men
Of marsh, wold and fen
Become so accustomed to its background noise
That we begin to like it that way . . .
It is going to be, I say,
Extremely awkward some day
When we come to the Albert Hall
To hear, say, Mendelssohn's *St. Paul*,
And discover that there are no

Waterlogged harps twanging under the floor,
Cossack choirs zipping it in the corridor
Nor
Atlantic breakers crashing against the door . . .
In that day
I think we shall say
"This is not what we heard before . . .
They have tampered with the score . . ."
And I am afraid we shall add
"We demand our money back or . . ."



THE PRISONER

MONDAY, February 7th.—Sir THOMAS MOORE, the quick-witted Irishman who sits for Ayr Burghs, in Scotland, has a pretty Parliamentary manner which enables him, figuratively, to "get away with murder." He rises, beams benevolently on the Government Front-bench, clasps his hands before him respectfully, and, in a voice that would charm a bone away from a hungry dog, delivers what he has to say.

To-day Mr. CHARLES KEY, who, as Minister of Works, is in some measure answerable for the rebuilding of the bomb-ruined House of Commons, was his victim. The Minister said there was "every hope" that the new House would be ready for occupation *after the summer recess of 1950*.

A spot of lightning calculation on the part of Sir THOMAS brought him to his feet with a plea for the under-dog—a plea with a barb in it. Before the summer recess of 1950, in all probability, there will have been a general election, and Sir THOMAS asked blandly that the new House might be opened sooner—"because of the thrill it will give a large number of Socialists, most Liberals, and a few Conservatives . . . who will not sit again."

By the time the House had recovered the next business had been called. Talk of the new House was not the only nostalgic touch in the day's proceedings. Before they moved on to the luscious topic of Scottish water-supply, Members talked a good deal about food.

Normally it is the Under-Secretary who has a bad time from Parliamentary questioners and the Minister who, with his greater prestige, overrides the quizzers. In the case of the Ministry of Food the position is reversed. But then the Under-Secretary is Dr. EDITH SUMMERSKILL (who is a Right Honourable, anyway), and both male and female colleagues have learned that, with her, discussion is the better part of valour.

But Mr. STRACHEY made a personal appearance to-day, and ran through the entire menu, present and (let us hope) future. For instance:

Parmesan cheese. Mr. DE LA BÈRE wanted it imported, because uninteresting rations can be made interesting by its use. Mr. S. promised some from Italy.

American cheese. Mr. SHEPHERD complained that it was regarded as tasteless, whereupon the resourceful Mr. KEELING said this could be remedied by keeping the cheese for a "few months."

Impressions of Parliament

Monday, February 7th.—House of Commons: Thought for Food and Vice Versa.

Tuesday, February 8th.—House of Commons: Heat and Sound.

Wednesday, February 9th.—House of Commons: Combat.

Thursday, February 10th.—House of Commons: Combat Renewed.

Australian hares. Mr. S. said his Ministry made £5,000 a year profit (thus paying his salary) from the importation of these elusive animals. The fact that most of them appeared to escape before the housewife is able to catch them was left unexplained.

Sausage skins. Mr. S. was asked to explain the shortage of sausages (a shortage few seem to have detected)



Impressions of Parliamentarians

71. Mr. Cocks (Broxtowe)

and pleaded that it was all a matter of the skins being in short supply. Capt. CROWDER, who has an astonishing fund of out-of-the-way knowledge, revealed that British sausage-makers had to pay £1 for a hundred yards of this essential clothing, which cost Continental sausage-makers only 5s. Mr. S. merely shrugged resignedly.

Ground-nuts. These are (figuratively only) always with us in Parliament. There were demands to-day for a White Paper on the progress of the schemes to grow them in all sorts of outlandish places. But Mr. S. said "No." He did add, however, that the contribution to our fats problem to be made by ground-nuts this year would be "on quite a small scale." And he seemed surprised and pained by the Conservative laughter.

Then to the discussion of Scotland's water supply and, eventually, to a

brief debate on Mr. Stalin's recent offer to meet President Truman to talk about settling the world's troubles. Mr. ATTLEE had said at Question-time that he did not propose to offer a meeting in London, and Mr. HECTOR MCNEIL, the Minister of State, said the same at the end of the evening. He added that the Soviet

Government's offer of a meeting had been made only because of the success of the Western Powers' efforts to work out a security pact between themselves. Communists and fellow-travellers registered annoyance.

TUESDAY, February 8th.—The House of Commons was in a testy mood to-day, and when Mr. ATTLEE, asked about some bottle- and brick-throwing at an election meeting in Northern Ireland (the missiles having allegedly been thrown by citizens of Eire), appeared to be off-hand about it, there was a burst of flame.

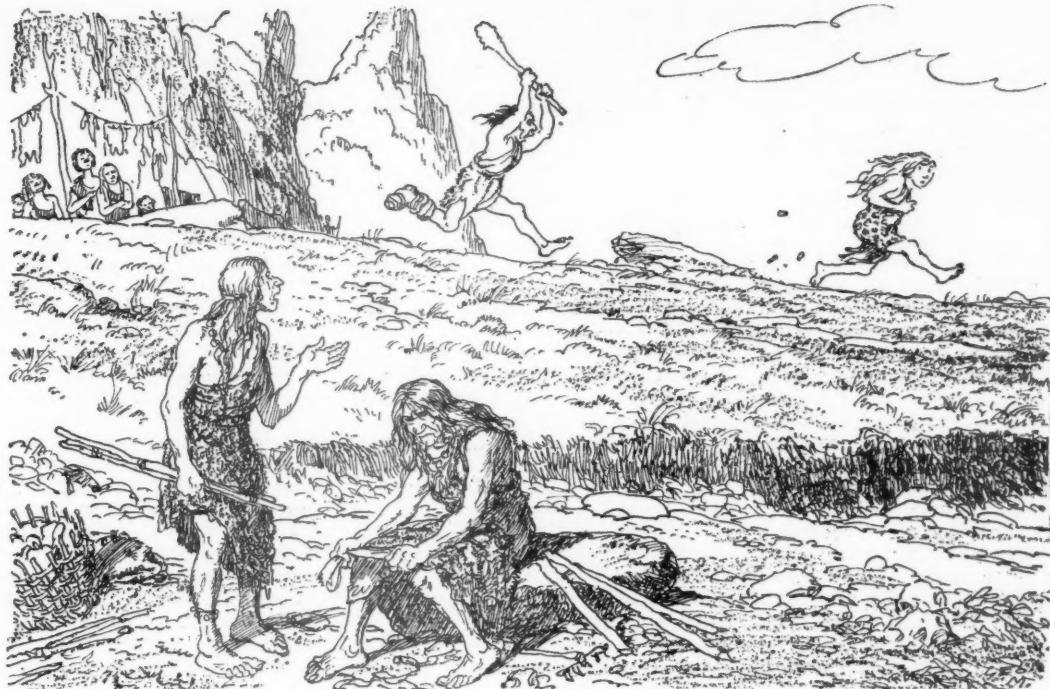
Soon afterwards, Mr. HERBERT MORRISON, who has lost some of his former sunny good-temper and tolerance, got very red in the face about the presence of a Central Office of Information official at a Labour gathering. This, said Tory critics, was all wrong, since Civil Servants ought not to take part in Party politics. This complaint, said Mr. MORRISON, was a "fuss," and—after a breezy exchange between him and Mr. STANLEY—the matter dropped.

After all this it was a relief when the House emptied (as is the modern Parliamentary custom in all but the most exciting matters) for the day's debate. It was a pity that the custom should have been observed to-day, for Mr. HAROLD WILSON, President of the Board of Trade, was able to give some very good news in the course of a discussion on trade.

This was that Britain's exports in January were the best since the war and were very little short of the "target" of 160 per cent. of the 1939 figure. The figures for January were "far and away" better than any ever before achieved, and this was a remarkable tribute to all concerned—workers, managers, salesmen, directors.

Thus encouraged, the House passed without a division a Bill to authorize the Government to guarantee exporters against loss through bad debts.

WEDNESDAY, February 9th.—The two sides of the House of Commons to-day wore the anticipatory expressions one might suppose were worn by the partisans in Roman gladiatorial



"Mr. Smith's gout must be better to-day."

contests. Soon Mr. CHURCHILL entered, and then the Prime Minister, to sit in their respective "corners" waiting expectantly and watchfully. At last, Mr. Speaker called Mr. CHURCHILL to his feet and he asked for a statement on the method of selecting the country's representatives at the Council of Europe.

Mr. ATTLEE replied aggressively that that was a matter that had to be considered. Mr. C. replied, no less forthrightly, that he hoped the Government would give an assurance that this would not be made a Government or Socialist Party monopoly. Mr. A. was non-committal. Mr. C. demanded that the Government should not commit "this impropriety." Mr. A. said this was another form of the same question to which he had replied. Mr. C. retorted: "To which you have refused to reply!" Mr. A. snapped that the answer would come in due course, and not just when Mr. C. asked for it. Mr. C. said he had hoped to relieve the Government of the reproach and stigma of refusing the suggestion. Mr. A. looked as if he couldn't care less, and Mr. C. added that any honest-minded Government would have been glad to give the assurance. Mr. A.

said nothing, so Mr. C. gave notice that he would demand a full day's debate—"to relieve the Government of the SHAME that rests upon it!" Mr. A. said there was no decision, one way or the other. Mr. C. asked why it was not possible to come to a decision on a question of decency or propriety. To which Mr. A. retorted that the decision would come at the proper time and not just when Mr. C. wanted it.

And so it ended. Everybody sat back, a trifle exhausted.

Earlier, Mr. CREECH JONES, the Colonial Secretary, had denied that Lord Baldwin's recall from his office as Governor of the Leeward Islands (to which he was appointed only a few months ago) had any connection with a speech he had made commenting in ironic and acid terms on the activities of Whitehall officials. He added that the Governor was coming home for "consultations," but took such evasive action when pressed for an assurance that His Excellency would be returning to the Leeward Islands that the hunt was at once up. However, just as the Minister, red in the face, seemed to be despairing, he found a hole and went to earth. But hounds remained on watch, and more will be heard of the matter.

THURSDAY, February 10th.—Mr. CHURCHILL strode into the House to-day with tread even more purposeful than before. As soon as he rose, a Whip left to rush the Prime Minister to the scene and Mr. Attlee arrived looking a little breathless.

Mr. CHURCHILL wanted a debate soon on the supplementary estimates for £221,000,000—chiefly for the Health Services and Food Ministry—presented yesterday, and he mentioned that this figure was about a quarter of the whole pre-war Budget and that it showed "the most wild miscalculation" on the part of the Government. Mr. Churchill wanted three days in which to discuss this reckless spending.

When someone opposite said, ironically, "Hear, hear!" Mr. CHURCHILL pulled what is known in the nursery as "a face" and retorted: "Yah, yah!" Which raised a roar of laughter from the House and a claret blush to the face of Mr. C., who said there might be a vote of censure.

It was announced that Mr. HARRY WILLINK is to preside over a Royal Commission on betting, lotteries and gaming. And then they talked about the Festival of Britain to be held in 1951.

Misleading Cases

The Egg of Exchange

House of Commons (Kitchen Committee) v. Haddock—(Before Mr. Justice Plush)

SIR ETHELRED RUTT, K.C., opening the case for the plaintiffs to-day, said: May it please your Lordship, I appear for the Kitchen Committee of the House of Commons. As defendant, the Court, no doubt, will be glad to see that veteran litigant, Mr. Albert Haddock, who is always welcome, however erroneous. His present appearance arises out of a gathering of dramatists at the House of Commons, some of whom were Members and some, more fortunate, were not. Mr. Haddock had made himself responsible for the cost of the refreshments provided, which, considering the eminence in their profession of many of the guests, could hardly be described as "lavish". Nowadays, if two citizens occupy a dwelling-place consisting of two small rooms and a bathroom where some of the appliances work it is described as a "luxury" flat. But that word, I am satisfied, is not here appropriate.

At the close of the proceedings, when the bill was presented to him, Mr. Haddock drew a cheque for Ten Pounds (£10) on an egg.

The Court. An egg?

Sir Ethelred. If your Lordship pleases—an egg.

The Court. A turkey's egg?

Sir Ethelred. No, milord, a hen's egg. Milord, it appears that the defendant, no doubt legitimately, had acquired three eggs, and brought them to the dinner at the House of Commons.

The Court. And the Kitchen Committee are insulted? I do not wonder. But is this a libel action?

Sir Ethelred. No, milord. The eggs, it appears, were intended as a tribute to the distinguished dramatist who presided over the gathering. On two of them those present wrote their "autographs", and these two were duly presented to the President. On the third—

The Court. What a party!

Sir Ethelred. Your Lordship will realize that the company included a good many bright and imaginative spirits. On the third egg, then, in small but legible characters, the defendant drew a cheque in the ordinary form of words: a stamp was duly attached and cancelled, according to the Stamp Act, and the whole document, if it can be so described, was presented to the Manager, Major S., in discharge of the debt. The Manager presented the cheque at the bank having charge of the Kitchen Committee's account, and asked that bank (which I will call Bank B) to collect the money in the usual manner from the defendant's bank (which I will call Bank A). The manager of Bank B, however, demurred to handling the cheque at all, and especially to making himself responsible for forwarding it through the usual channels. It would require, he said, the employment of special receptacles and messengers—

The Court. Was the cheque hard-boiled?

Sir Ethelred. No, milord, it was a fresh cheque. Indeed, there is some evidence that it was a new-laid cheque.

The Court. What a waste!

Sir Ethelred. That, milord, was one of the considerations which affected the minds of my clients. "No man", as Lord Mildew said in a recent case, "can pretend to full cognisance and understanding of all the rules and regulations concerning the feeding of the King's subjects at the present time." But it would be unlikely, my clients thought, if there were not some Statutory Rule or Order against the use of a fresh egg as a Bill of Exchange.

The Court. Yes, Sir Ethelred, but I thought that in these affairs the House of Commons could do what it liked? Surely, that was all settled by the singular but satisfactory case of *Rex v. Sir R. F. Graham-Campbell and others. Ex parte Herbert (1935) 1 K.B.*

Sir Ethelred. That is the best opinion, milord; but the House has never cared to abuse its privileges, or

to set an unworthy example to the people. If it were to get about, they thought, that Members of the House of Commons were in the habit of using fresh eggs as cheques, promissory notes, I.O.U.s or—who knows?—for the transfer of shares or securities, an unfavourable impression might be made upon a people still bravely suffering under the reign of Austerity.

The Court. But stop a moment, Sir Ethelred. I think, perhaps, I was a little hasty. Let us see what would happen to the egg. It was, I take it, the defendant's property? There is no suggestion that it was a pilfered or unrationed egg?

Sir Ethelred. No, milord. Indeed, in these days the relevant eggs might even have been what are described officially as "surplus eggs", though they have still, for most of us, a merely notional existence.

The Court. Pretty notional, I agree, Sir Ethelred. Very well. The egg, I suppose, passes from your client's bank, through the Banker's Clearing House, or whatever it is, to the defendant's bank. They read and obey the instructions on the cheque: and, their duty discharged, return the cheque, as usual, to the defendant. If it were a paper-cheque he could use it to light his pipe: if it is an egg-cheque, he can eat, or, I suppose I should say, consume it. I do not really see what objections can be raised by the Ministry of Food to such a transaction.

Sir Ethelred. As your Lordship pleases. But there remains the question of the difficulties of transit—

The Court. Why didn't your bank have the cheque hard-boiled?

Sir Ethelred. Milord, that was considered by the bank. But it was thought that the stamp would become detached in the process of boiling, and perhaps the writing be extinguished.

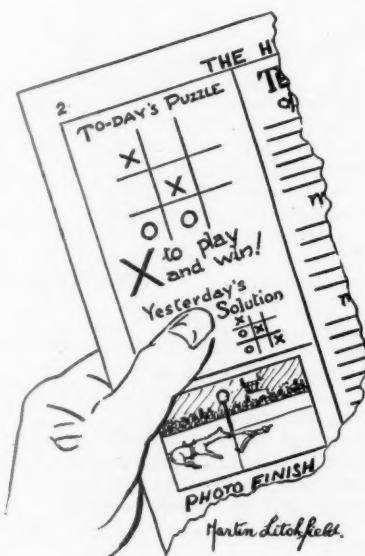
The Court. As to the stamp, it could surely have been attached again: and there is nothing, I think, to prevent the holder from attaching and cancelling a new stamp, if necessary. As for the writing, if I know anything of Mr. Haddock, he uses one of those queer new pens which write under water.

Sir Ethelred. As to that, milord, I am not instructed.

The Court. Extraordinary. Go on, Sir Ethelred.

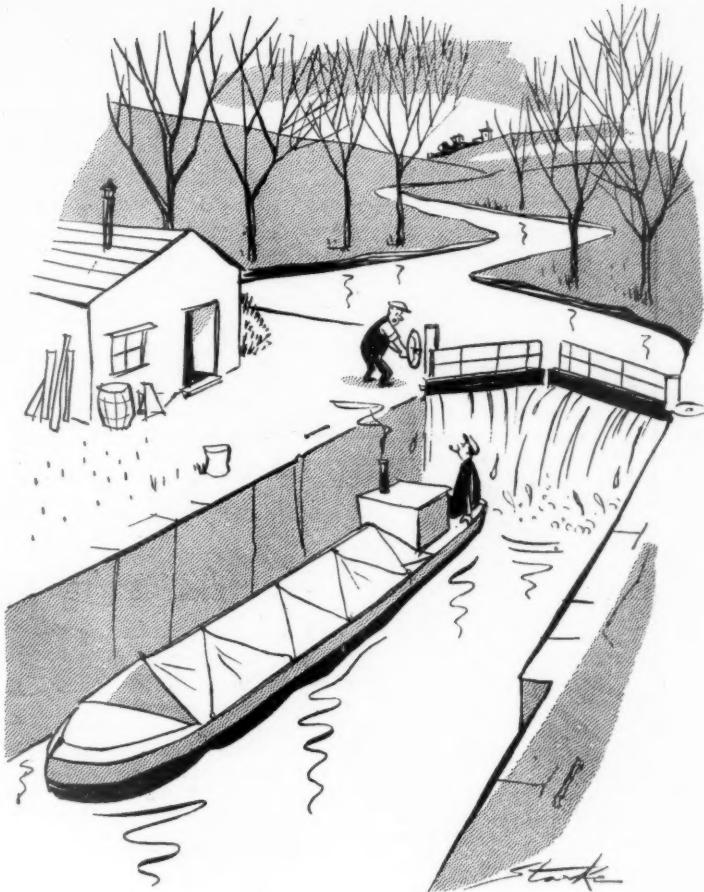
Sir Ethelred. My clients, milord, declined to accept the cheque in payment and presented their account again. The defendant—

The Court. The defendant, I suppose, took umbrage? He said that he was not accustomed to having his cheques scorned and rejected—and you could take it or leave it?



Sir Ethelred. That was roughly his position, milord. And he has obstinately refused to discharge the debt.

The Court. Sir Ethelred, before you proceed any farther you may care to consult with your clients, and with learned counsel on the other side. It is true that your clients are not bound to accept a cheque of any kind. But in practice, without doubt, many of your debts are collected in this way; and, having regard to the general custom and his own position, the defendant is naturally reluctant to get the name of one who passes worthless cheques. Your clients, or rather your clients' bank, are not in fact objecting to payment by cheque, but to payment by this particular cheque: and the defendant may well have expected to hear some stronger objections than those which you have, so far, exposed. There is nothing magical or mystical about a cheque. It is simply a written instruction by one person to a second person to pay money to a third—to which, of course, a rapacious State insists upon the addition of a stamp. It does not matter where it is written, provided the intention is clear. It can be written on a bill of fare, upon a napkin, or, if no other paper be available, the label of a brandy-bottle, and such cheques have, in fact, passed safely through the banking channels and been duly honoured and met. It could, I suppose, be written on an outhouse or the side of a balloon, provided that it was brought effectively to the notice of the bank addressed and the necessary stamp was attached before presentation. Between a brandy-bottle, an outhouse and an egg there can clearly be no great distinction of principle. Nor am I much impressed by the practical difficulties to which you have referred. It is the duty of a bank to keep the stream of commerce flowing and navigable, and to destroy, not to create, new obstacles in the fairway. You tell me, Sir Ethelred, that your bank, because of the brittle and breakable quality of the cheque in question, was reluctant to undertake the responsibility of transporting it to the proper quarter, though all that was necessary, after all, was to place the cheque in the hand of a trustworthy boy (or even girl) and hire a motor-cab. On the other hand, it shrank, I understand, from making the simple experiment of boiling the cheque—and boiling it hard. This, Sir Ethelred, was not the spirit of those old merchant venturers who made the name of commercial England famous and admired. Of course, if it became a general practice for men of commerce and industry to employ the egg for such purposes,



"Say when."

a state of affairs might arise in which Parliament would feel itself compelled to intervene. But it is always a great mistake to treat the individual on the chance that he may become a crowd. And meanwhile, I, at least, have to deal with the law as it stands to-day. Call Mr. Haddock.

Sir Ethelred. But, milord—!

The Court. I am well aware that this

procedure is unusual, Sir Ethelred. So is the case.

Mr. Albert Haddock was sworn and said: Yesterday I wrote in ordinary ink upon an egg the same form of words as were on the egg in this case. I boiled the egg for five minutes, and the writing was as clear as ever.

The Court. You see, Sir Ethelred? The Court will adjourn. A. P. H.

Valentine

D EVOULTY, with a garland and candle in my hand before the saints and martyrs suppliant I stand.
I bring the flowers, I bring the flame, a fairly constant heart;
but seven bishops bear the name—
where should my prayers start?
St. Valentine of Smyrna? St. Valentine of Rhodes?
St. Valentine the Greater? St. Valentine the Less?
Who shall I ask to bless?

I bring the spring's first branches to lay upon the shrine
of the spring's saint, the Bishop (which is he?) Valentine.
To pray that without measure his blessings may be sent,
the ever-springing pleasure of hope and of content.
St. Valentine of Russia, St. Valentine of Crete,
St. Valentine the Patriarch; Saints Valentine, be kind,
that all who seek may find.



"Left, Left—Right, Right—Steady—On Target!"

H. J.'s Dramatic Fragments

I WROTE this Fragment as a forfeit when B. Smith beat me in our weekly game of Musical Chairs and set me to compose Dialect Drama without using the letter Z.

HOW TO GET THE BEST OUT OF A THUNDERSTORM

(*The scene is a bench outside an Inn. The bench is thick with Ancients.*)

Mw. WIMB. Sitting hereby and meditating be grand for raising the thirst. The thoughts go a-whirligig round my head and the good ale flows lollypop-lop adown my gullet and I be content.

GAFFER HODGE. Tankard stuff does remind me of when I were a scourgesome youth and a bane to preservers of game. But now they be agone who fenced in the pheasants and set them about with traps to take a man by the hoof. From dust they came and to dust they be crumbled and the short passage of them was but an eddy in the wind. Clouded be their bright wings and their golden haloes be tarnished before noontide and the evening of their days was but a yawn and a sinking to rest. Terrible hot their passions and terrible cold the ashes of them, and here be I, an old man drinking a little ale for memory's sake.

UNCLE PERCE CATHCART. Hey, but the good ale do aid me to recall they times and doings when a-skirting I

would go, as frisky as any minnow after the lasses. 'Tis chucklesome for I to think of Meg Mutch, Tambourine Tilly, Flo from down Parkers and Little Josephine Bythe-Bennett.

Mw. WIMB. I be reminded by the rich brown ale not of lawless poachery or the hunting of damsels down larksome lanes but of the awesome night when Bander's Bull were took with the hypnotics. Oh, but 'twas a grand, dark beast, as staunch as a vaulting-horse and as high as a carter's whip.

GAFFER HODGE. He had horns on him as could pierce like a rapier or cut like a sabre or crunch and rip like a spear. When he planted his forehooves forrards and lowered his thundrous head, the very scarecrows skipped and pranced to the safety of the further fields, gathering their shadows about them.

UNCLE PERCE CATHCART. All the trouble were along of a woman, a bosomy wench and niece to Sir Walpert of the Priory, and her high sweet laugh leading a man to his doom. After dinner it began, in the long, sparkling drawing-room when the men were vying in feats and the women egging them on. And one on them, a furriner from Radivilishki way, were boasting he had the art of quelling a man with his eye and making his will his own.

Mw. WIMB.. Great bodkins and skewers he stuck into Mr. Grant, who ne'er butted the same again, though at

the time he felt naught, as if bewitched. Thomas and Ebenczer shivered with ague and parched with fever at the furriner's command, and when they brought him the little still-room maid, Charity Faith, with a laugh as light as a mist he turned her head so as she believed she were a dolphin and so believed until her dying day.

GAFFER HODGE. "Twas the hussy Beves, Sir Walpert's niece, as challenged him. "From my ruby lips a guerdon shall you win, so be you hypnotize Bander's Bull," she cried with a ripple of heartless mirth, like the bells on a circus dancer's toes. A gasp of horror was heard from all around. E'en Sir Walpert, though ever stately and calm, so far forgot himself as to banch; but the furriner were afear'd to be named poltroon and nodded his assent to the bond.

UNCLE PERCE CATHCART. Out to Bander's trooped the company, all gay and elegant. When Bander heard what were afoot he begged for the furriner's life, being a man as knew his bull and that every man he killed would lower his price in the market, for England be a peaceable place as does not like bulls to be the manslaughtering kind, though in Spain 'tis said to be different, all along, maybe, of they olives they eat so much mun sicken they of the flavour of peace.

Mw. WIMB. Sweeping Bander aside, the company ranged themselves to watch behind the stout fences that lined the yard; and the furriner stood waiting alone like a lighthouse in a hostile sea, while the men turned the winch that drew the bolt from the bull-shed door and the cord from the ringéd nose. When the great bull knew he was free he sniffed the wide open air and there came to his ears the high, sarcastical ring of a maiden laugh; Beves was at her egging on once more. Out from the gaping front of the shed, slow and powerful and sure came the beast, and the anger beginnig to start in the neck of him and his eyes to close in on the furriner in hate.

GAFFER HODGE. The furriner stood his ground, rooted-like, and from the safety and the comfort of the fence the company cried out to him to try his hypnotizing. Nor, i' faith, was there much else he could do. He leaned him forrad and gazed the bull full between the eyes and all the terror of him came out as power between his lids.

UNCLE PERCE CATHCART. The bull, the humped and rage-red bull, stamped in new strength from the earth and sent a bellow before and made ready all the weight and fury and skill of him. The small stars shone clear and cold as justice and the moon—

Mw. WIMB. —held the terror and logic of a madman's reason. All waited for the clash and the splintering and wondered which side the furriner would fall. "Twas a suspensful time; but the charge were uncommon delayed. The twain stood there like statuaries, each bending on t'other the force of un's will. Then slow and gradual the rage in the bull died down and the furriner's mind entered betwixt his eyes and mastered him.

GAFFER HODGE. When the furriner seed what he'd done and how his hypnotizing were stronger and better than he had guessed, he smirked in his furrin way and showed off like a woman. He patted the bull on the head and made him kneel like a camel to let him on and off. Chill were the air and the clouds took hands to hide the light of the moon. Beves allowed him the winner and saucily cried to him to take his prize; but he carried on with his tricks. Some made to go away

back to the warmth of the house, but the bull sent a roar after them that scared them back to look.

UNCLE PERCE CATHCART. Made the bull to dance and to count and to scratch alphabetical letters on the ground with his horns did the furriner, and the applause faded and died away, but he still went on, for a' had been much overlooked in youth. Then at last, with a look as proud and defiant as a barnyard cock, he turned his back on the shivering crew that watched, and beckoning with his little finger and whispering low and soothsome he led the great strong bull out through the gate, adown the lane and away for evermore.

Mw. WIMB. Some do say as the furriner took Bander's Bull back with him across the sea as pet and solace in furrin parts, which do need some gladdening for a man to abide there long. And some do say as 'twas all magic and the land they went to was not a land on the map. But what be certain and unconfounded is that Beves, once gay and light as a daisy flower, did become overcast and thoughty and never egged on no more.

GAFFER HODGE. And these be tales as do rise in an old man's breast when he sits on a bench in the sun and the ale makes sap for his veins. No beast were ever poached so neat andfeat as yon; so the toast I drink is the furriner and the drink I drink is ale.

UNCLE PERCE CATHCART. Thoughts of a wet brain in a wet season.

FINIS



J.W.TAYLOR

WIDOWERS' HOUSES

Widowers' Houses is Shaw's first play and a collectors' jewel. We could feel the awe as the Arts Theatre curtain rose upon that hardly awesome scene of Mr. William de Burgh Cokane and Dr. Harry Trench keeping their watch on the Rhine. This performance, like that by the Independent Theatre in 1892, was indeed "sufficiently exciting," although no one "hooted frantically," and, alas, the young G. B. S. himself was not present to flash a red beard at the audience. This aside, the comedy whisked from shelf to stage without any apparent stiffness or self-consciousness. No dusty answer here: from the first, *Sartorius*, *Cokane*, and that coming man, *Lickcheese*, speak in the clearest Shavian accent. Only *Blanche Sartorius* is a problem-child: she has the winning qualities of a fire-alarm: it was cruel of Shaw to condemn *Harry Trench* to life with this "vital and energetic" young woman, well-dressed, well-fed, strong-minded—and impossible.

Still, the noisy creature is a side-issue. (Miss STELLA RICHMAN, at the Arts, gallantly fights her losing field.) Our hearts are with *Sartorius*, the tightly-buttoned slum landlord who should certainly stand in bronze in a public park; with *Cokane*, that genteel shrub; and with *Lickcheese*, the collector of rents, who spins in the course of a single interval from the shabby, nervous, pertinacious human terrier of the first stage direction to an exuberant, glossy tiger. SHAW must have laughed aloud when he transformed *Lickcheese*; Mr. HAROLD SCOTT now fills out the part with an imperial gusto. You have only to look at the fellow in the third act to know that before you is a promoter of the North Thames Iced Mutton Depot Company.

The themes here are slum landlordism, municipal jobbery, and tainted money. But to-day we think of Widowers' Houses less for its polemical bite than for its wit—the first Shavian sparks in the theatre—and for the freedom of its character creation. Mr. ESME PERCY has ordered the play discreetly and well, and his actors

Widowers' Houses (ARTS)—*Here Come the Clowns* (NEW LINDSEY)—*The Merchant of Venice*, *Macbeth* (BEDFORD)

have, all of them, the right style and relish: Mr. STANLEY VAN BEERS as that rigid curtain-rod of a man, *Sartorius*; Mr. JOHN RUDDOCK, who enjoys *Cokane's* fidgets; and Mr. DAVID MARKHAM as *Trench* who learns, too late, the source of his income. (A plague on all your houses!) A bow also to Miss JOAN COOPER as the weeping, kneeling parlourmaid who is probably

everyday types, you will observe—include *Ma* herself, once a female impersonator; an Irish stage-hand called *Clancy*, in a murk of sulphurous dejection; a pair of vaudeville dancers; a ventriloquist and his wife; a midget, an illusionist called *Pabst*, and a mixed clutch of others. After a talkative evening designed to show why everyone is lapped in gloom, somebody takes a belated shot at *Pabst*—who has become master of the ceremonies—and hits *Clancy*. Solemnities over, the less well informed troop out in decent silence. Having secured a crib, I am able to explain that the café represents a small cross-section of the world, that the Globe Theatre adjoining is run by a *Mr. Concannen* who represents God, and that *Pabst* is the Devil. At the end, when *Clancy* is shot, he knows that he has "found God in the free will of Man." Huck Finn said of *Pilgrim's Progress*, "The statements is interesting but tough." Mr. BARRY's play, I fear, is just tough. Anyone who reads the title literally may have an odd evening, though he will be helped by the vigorous acting of Mr. DENIS CAREY (stage-hand) and Mr. OLAF POOLEY (Devil), and by the consciousness that, whatever else you may say about it, it's certainly Deep. (And Tough.)



[Widowers' Houses]

LANDLORDS' DISAGREEMENT

Cokane	MR. JOHN RUDDOCK
Sartorius	MR. STANLEY VAN BEERS
Dr. Harry Trench	MR. DAVID MARKHAM

the play's ripest period exhibit. This revival from our theatre in the 'nineties is far from being a tedious exhumation or a morbid bone-rattling. It still offers a brisk evening, and contentedly Shavian collectors tick it on their lists. Shakespeareans look on in envy. Won't anyone have a shot at, say, *Titus Andronicus*?

Shaw, in the theatre as elsewhere, has the gift of clarity. No doubt he could have burnished the theme of Mr. PHILIP BARRY's *Here Come the Clowns*, an American play that blanketed some of its first-night audience in a dark haze. The scene is Ma Speedy's Café des Artistes: those present—sound,

The Bedford at Camden Town, with the opulent boxes, the mirrors, the ornate flourish of decoration, and the memories of

Sickert, is, blessedly, a theatre theatrical with no attempt at disguise. And since Mr. DONALD WOLFIT's Shakespeare revivals are in the same vein, company and theatre are now happily fitted to each other. At *The Merchant of Venice*, the better of the productions I saw, a crammed, ecstatic audience heard the news on the Rialto as if it had been written yesterday. Mr. WOLFIT's *Shylock* preserves its authority: this is a powerful uncompromising portrait. Although *Macbeth* came off less well, it would be unfair to judge this revival—with Mr. WOLFIT sonorously at its heart—on the evidence of an evening when some demon of ill-luck seemed to be mockingly active. J. C. T.

Spring

AFTER making his usual Saturday speech about it being two-and-six and would I mind putting out the bottles a bit more regularly, the milkman added that there was a touch of spring in the air and that if it were not for the calendar you would think it was May. I replied that I had long ago abandoned the foolish superstition that there was the slightest connection of any sort between the calendar and the weather, but admitted that it was a nice day. He said that the first touch of spring always made him feel he wanted to jump over gates; but he had never actually done it because the bottles made it awkward. Spring-like mornings affect different people in different ways. They make milkmen want to jump over gates, and they make Edith sing.

Directly after breakfast she started tra-la-la-ing all over the house in a most disturbing manner, and when I pointed out that constant tra-la-la-ing made it quite impossible for me to concentrate on my work she just laughed merrily and said that the flowers that bloomed in the spring, tra-la, had nothing to do with the case. I was searching for the ear-plugs left over from the war when Sympson passed by the window and I saw that he also had been affected adversely by the weather. He had pruned his moustache and was wearing a particularly revolting tie and his plus fours.

The effect of a spring-like morning upon myself is strictly utilitarian. I feel an urge to do jobs about the house, such as taking the geyser to pieces and scraping all the green stuff from the inside, putting a new screw in the kitchen door-knob so that Edith will no longer have to climb out of the window about once a week when it comes off in her hand, and re-painting the bit of wall over the wash-basin in the spare bedroom which Uncle George always ruins every time he comes by splashing a great deal more than is necessary.

Most men being affected by spring in this way would probably just go bull-headed at the first job that occurred to them, but I hate slapdash methods and always approach the task systematically. I get a pencil and a large piece of paper and go from room to room making a list of things that need to be done. This morning I found nineteen jobs that needed doing in my study alone, ranging from nailing down the bit of carpet by the door that the rural dean tripped over in May 1947 to oiling the grandfather clock, which



Mervyn Wilson

"It took me seventy-three kiosks to find one called Brenda."

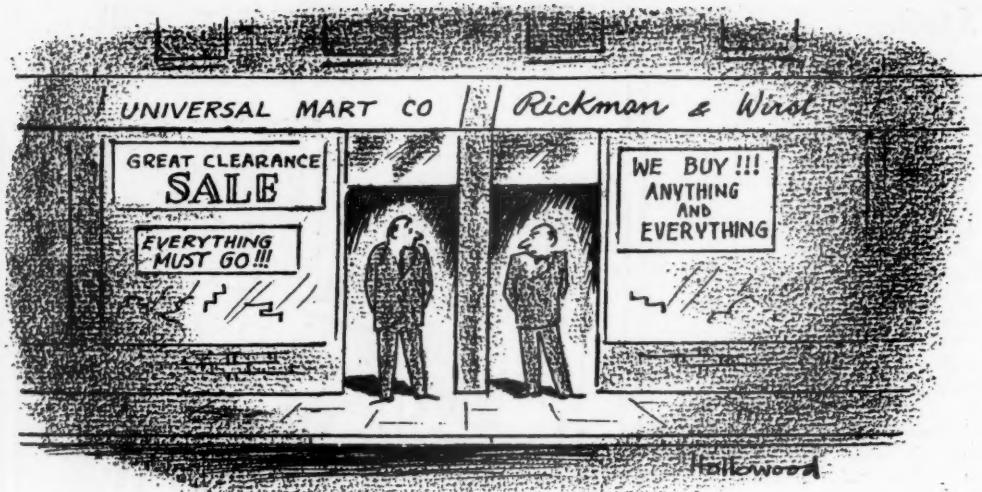
wheezes asthmatically while getting up strength to strike, especially at night.

By lunch-time I had completed my inventory of jobs to be done in the study, and this afternoon I propose to take my pencil and paper to the garden shed. This takes a good deal of moral courage, because if there is one place where jobs wanting to be done accumulate more than another, it is the garden shed. It is a long thin shed and Edith keeps her bicycle in it. She puts it just inside the door, and to get into the shed I have to push the bicycle forward, when it always hits the lawnmower, whose handle strikes the rake, which knocks down the shelf on which I keep my paint-brushes in a jam-jar. All that is needed to put a stop to this vicious circle is to fix a couple of huge hooks on the wall for Edith to hang her

bicycle on, and this job will be right at the top of my list. Then there are two croquet mallets to be mended and a decision to be reached about the odd sea-boot and at least fifty jobs in connection with cleaning and sharpening tools. It will take me all afternoon and most of to-morrow to list the garden-shed jobs, and then I shall need further lists for all the rooms in the house not already dealt with. My great fear is that one year the first spell of spring-like weather will last long enough for me to finish my lists and be faced with the awful prospect of actually starting work on the jobs.

I feel pretty safe this year, however, because the B.B.C. man has just announced that the mild spell is expected to go on for several days, and we all know what that means.

D. H. B.



Our Booking Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Of Tides and Men

SALTINGS and reed-beds and estuaries are not everybody's fancy in scenery, but whoever shares with Mr. NEGLEY FARSON that more literal and more innocent *nostalgie de la boue* must find *The Sons of Noah* (GOLLANCZ, 12/6) immensely attractive. For Mr. FARSON evokes the low wet coastlands of the eastern states, their atmosphere and their detail, from Cape May to Cape Hatteras, with the magic of a Hudson. Not that this novel, autobiographical in form and obviously so in the experience at the root of it, is merely a landscape with figures. Its scenes are laid in New York and Washington as well as on the Chesapeake and the Delaware; the curtain that rises on Mollusc, N.J., "where a stake stuck in the mud to mark a channel or a heron fishing in the shallows is an important object," goes down on the French Riviera, where "everything seems to have been tainted by man"; and there is an almost fiercely critical presentation of the sophisticated America of the fabulous 'twenties. But it is to their boats that both Dick Fenner, who tells the tale, and Caspar Greer, his friend and rival, flee from the complications that beset them ashore, and the girl who completes a triangle of which the peculiar configuration would have thrilled an Elizabethan playwright is a creature of that amphibious world. The boats in this book are as alive as the humans, and that is saying much. So are the cats, those other symbols of Fenner's (or Mr. FARSON's) ideal of freedom and self-sufficiency.

F. B.

Looking Backward

That deft and perceptive rummaging in the pockets of time which historians call research seldom gives as much entertainment to the onlooker as it does to the rummager. But *Family Background* (CAPE, 10/6), which is entirely devoted to the fortunes of the House of Russell from the eighteenth to the fourteenth century, is a very lively assemblage indeed. Miss GLADYS SCOTT THOMSON has devoted four essays to four periods of Russell history and several different seats of that acquisitive family; and it was

a sound idea to start with the fourth duke, who rebuilt Woburn Abbey, and work back to Dorset merchants trading in Gascon wine. A Marian Russell was exiled for Protestantism and his fortunes were further reduced by having to entertain Elizabeth. His letter endeavouring to avert the invasion by describing "the old house and barren soil" of Chenies is one of the historian's most amusing finds. Her *pièces de résistance*, however, are the accounts and inventories of three centuries. When you learn that the Georgian state bed cost nearly £400 and had "Orange Belladine silk crape Tossells," and that even Chenies once owned but one chair to "twenty turned stools and two forms," you hardly need Miss THOMSON's well-sketched historical background to contrast the last of the Middle Ages with the reign of the nabobs.

H. P. E.

The Real Russia

Married to an Englishman towards the close of the war, Mrs. TANYA MATTHEWS has given an account of her first thirty years in *Russian Child and Russian Mother* (GOLLANCZ, 15/-). It is a fascinating book, written with the candour and naturalness and absence of over-dramatization which used to characterize Russian authors in pre-Soviet days. Many of the writer's early memories are of cold and hunger and sporadic shooting; but in the Cossack country, where she spent part of her childhood, food was plentiful, and she had many happy experiences, including first love, inspired by a boy who, unlike her usual companions, was frail and touched her heart by his feeble attempts to climb a wall. During the nineteen-thirties she became increasingly aware of the Kremlin's tightening grip on the country; but though some of her friends were arrested and fear of trouble with the secret police became general, her private cares and desires continued to be her chief concern. There was Nick, her first husband, whom she did not love, and Ilia, a film-producer, whom she adored with little response; and above all there was her mother, who is wonderfully drawn in her mingled devotion

to, and exasperation with, her incalculable daughter, and in the care she gives to her granddaughter, Nick's child. This is a remarkable book in its own right; but its immediate interest and value are as a reminder to the Western reader that Russians are not robots, but as human, complex and sensitive as himself.

H. K.

Libelling a City

New York during the American Civil War was solely concerned, according to Mr. WILLIAM BLAKE, with a desire to make money out of the country's troubles. Elections might be falsified, secessionist riots organized or a break-away of the north-western states encouraged with no more compunction than would attend the assassination of a Government agent or the dishonouring of a contract, and it was only the steadfastness of one honest man—Abraham Lincoln—that preserved the Union against treacheries more dangerous than the Southern armies. In a book—*The Copperheads* (CASSELL, 15/-)—which mixes patches of gross vulgarity with occasional effective tales of lively action, the writer is hampered by too many obsessions. He wishes to argue every possible point of view in the person of some one of his innumerable characters while framing a piece of genuine historical presentation about a human romance. Further, he has both a marked pro-German bias and a surprising number of rather spiteful antipathies. Inevitably the load is too much to carry in one volume, however portentous, and in the result his people are wooden, his much-laboured heroine fearfully unattractive, and the history almost unbearably complex. The New York of the period emerges as something really too poisonously bad to be true. A "copperhead" is a venomous snake.

C. C. P.

Farming, How, Why and Wherefore

The subsistence farm, selling what it has over in the nearest market, and the food-factory catering for the people are conceptions so diverse that it is hard to see why the one ever lent itself to becoming the other. But you trace the town's ruinous demands for cheap bread (as well as for cheap circuses) as far back as the Roman *latifundia* in *A History of Agriculture* (BELL, 10/6), by Mr. T. BEDFORD FRANKLIN of *Good Pastures*; and the older subsistence farming a thousand years before that. Although the writer comes from the high-farming stock that benefited by enclosures, metropolitan markets and machinery, he has no illusions about the effect of these amenities on the countryside; and among the vivid pictures that make his book the lively chronicle it is, the most haunting is that of Arthur Young's dispossessed peasant: "If I am frugal, shall I have leave to build a cottage? If I am sober, shall I have land for a cow? . . . Bring me another pot." Even great adventures like the reclamation of the fens have their seamy side—the ruined freeholders of the past, the increasing costs and hazards of the future. The author's all-round fairness is conspicuous until we come to present-day developments, when a rather uncritical devotion to Rothamsted leaves Robert Elliot and Albert Howard out of a stimulating record and a useful bibliography.

H. P. E.

V.I.P.s

Miss KAY SUMMERSBY, Irish by birth and now an American citizen, was with General Eisenhower, as driver and later as personal secretary, from his arrival in London in May 1942 till his return to the States in the autumn of 1945. The keynote of *Eisenhower Was My Boss* (WERNER

LAURIE, 11/6) is struck on the first page. Detailed with four other drivers to "pick up a packet of Very Important Persons due in from the United States," Miss SUMMERSBY was depressed at being assigned to General Eisenhower, of whom neither she nor the others had heard. It did not take her long to realize that her good star had guided her to the very centre of V.I.Pdom. Presently Mr. Churchill is ploughing "across a broad airfield, scattering Brass Hats and V.I.P.s like a bull stamping through a chicken yard, just to say 'hallo' to me." General Patton, "the most glamorous, dramatic general I'd ever met," is touring the East End with Miss SUMMERSBY, cursing the Germans, apologizing for his oaths, and cursing again. President Roosevelt is insisting on being driven round Tunis by her, and for the time being overshadows General Eisenhower himself: "That famous smile magnetized every eye. Even General Eisenhower . . . seemed to fade away." General Montgomery, however, left her in the anteroom when she drove General Eisenhower to his headquarters. As a soldier Montgomery impressed Miss SUMMERSBY unfavourably, and she believes that, but for the effect on British opinion, Eisenhower would have been glad to send him back to England.

H. K.



"Dear Sir, in answer to your advertisement . . ."



"Well, that's all I can tell you about her for the moment, my dear, but I've no doubt you'll be able to exaggerate it a bit."

Just the Job

"I KNOW that you will be happy here," said my new employer, with what I considered unjustifiable optimism, and hurried off to a conference in the attic.

The Tantalus Publishing Company had been bombed into its present quarters, and did not fit. Out of the gaunt and moist house, which had itself been the only one of a row to escape destruction, bulged files and stocks and furniture.

My office was less like a room than a passage; it had, unfortunately, two doors. In due course I met everyone, merely by sitting at my desk. They all came strolling through my room to visit what some called the Accounts Department and others called, with equal accuracy, the kitchen, where the adding-machine competed with the sink for a bit of daylight, the ledgers were overshadowed by a fat geyser, and on the wobbling gas-ring, at ankle level, many a kettle of morning-tea water spurted.

In amongst platoons of teacups which the office junior regularly neglected to wash, Mr. Sparrow, the

accountant, tore his thin hair and blinked sadly behind his thick glasses.

"But what is the company for?" they asked me at home, when I had been with Tantalus for about a fortnight.

"I'll let you know as soon as I find out," I promised. Then I, too, hurried off to a conference in the attic.

They liked conferring—hours of it. I well remember their genteel huzzas of satisfaction upon discovering that they had only lost twice the money they had made in publishing that useful pamphlet *Two Hundred Ways of Making Tea*; and the amoeba-like precision and zeal with which their committees of experts split into sub-committees and sub-sub-committees, each with a life of its own. I usually averaged one severe headache for each three committees.

What was grandiosely termed the Personnel accounted for several neuralgic attacks also, for Miss Whippet thought and counted out loud, Mr. Slope kept his files in the bath and always wanted to get at them when I was washing my hands, and Mrs. Harp

could never forget that the whole thing was beneath her.

Only in the eyes of the unfortunate Mr. Sparrow could I see any reflection of my perturbation, and only when it became necessary for us both to work late by ourselves in the office one night did he speak his heart.

"They've got no idea!" he bleated to me, waving his hand helplessly to include everything from the cat-haunted area outside his window to the brightly mad posters designed by the advertising manager. "Sometimes, you know, it's too much. It really is." He choked, and I thought he was going to cry.

"Chaos," he added, pronouncing the "ch" as in "cheese."

"Never mind," I said feebly, "perhaps things will be better some day."

"Not this side the tomb," said Mr. Sparrow, thumbing gloomily through muddles and inter-muddles of a lavishness guaranteed to make the toughest auditor blench.

The rest of the staff, however, considered Tantalus office technique the

last word. For my part I could only wish that the last word would actually be reached, for a feverish flow of small notes "for your information" passed from hand to hand, from attic to basement and back again, all day long. Stocks of unsold books—*Swan-Upping for Amateurs, Be Your Own Shoemaker*—accumulated underfoot; dust settled, gently persistent, into morning cups of tea and the backs of necks; printers pressed for payment in language hot and cold.

Mr. Sparrow's hair grew alarmingly thin—his hands were seldom unwound from it—and my head began to feel as

though a village blacksmith had been shaping horse-shoes on it.

Then, one night when I had started to do a little homework after dinner, I found that half my notes were missing. It was a mild night; I did not grudge the walk back to the office.

As I reached the corner of the street graced by Tantalus and all its works I stopped short. Three fire-engines, a hundred people and a large quantity of smoke all but hid the scene of my daily round.

Then, as I hurried along the familiar pavement, a Brock's benefit of flames blossomed out of the attic where so

many conferences had met and murmured; window glass cracked, and loud protesting pops came from the unlovely building.

I edged my way into the crowd.

"Stand back!" shouted the firemen. I stood back, hastily—on someone's toes.

Turning, I beheld Mr. Sparrow, hatless and rapt, in the fire's red light. I don't think he even noticed me.

Tears of deep feeling trickled down his cheeks—which already looked plumper—and absent-mindedly he dabbed at them with a very dirty handkerchief. Very dirty, and smelling highly of petrol.

Ossm

MUMMY! Mummy, what can you do when you've thought of something *very good* and no one else thinks it is: what can you? Well, it was a story, for our magazine. Well, our magazine that we're having: Ossm. Ossm, Mummy. It's its name: it's called Ossm because of being Our Secret Society Magazine: Ossm. Christopher had to be the editor because of writing best; he said he wasn't going to copy things out if anyone else was the editor. Mummy, may I eat a bit of this cabbage stump, please?

So we had a meeting to decide who to do what bits, and Christopher said he'd done his already, it was a picture of our house, like it might be in the summer if we had flowers everywhere and not only where they usually are. And he'd done it so big Martin said you couldn't have pages that size, and he said it was *two* pages, right across, and Martin said even the backs of it, that were two other pages, were much too big, and there would have to be a lot of gaps, and Christopher said it wouldn't look like a magazine with a lot of gaps, they always had *something* all over. Mummy, this cabbage stump seems as if it's almost going to be like a nut and then it isn't. May I have a piece of potato, please? Oh, all right.

Well, Christopher said if there were a lot of gaps he'd have to draw some more pictures in them, and Martin said there ought to be some stories and things and he'd written a very good poem but he'd lost it, it was the one that started "Twinkle is a cat and Twinkle is her name," and there were several more lines. He said he might remember them if he thought: anyway he'd look for it. Hilary said she saw it the other day: it was wrapped round a bottle of glue. Christopher said that wouldn't take up much room; how

many lines was it? Martin said about six, or it might be seven, and you couldn't count how good a poem was by how many lines, it was if it rhymed and that sort of thing, and Christopher would have to write it big, and Christopher said well he couldn't write as big as all that, what else could we have?

Mummy, it was *me* that thought of something very big. I said I'd made up a story, it was about a man who went to a desert island and found it was full of thieves and robbers and he tracked them off the island with a chest full of treasure and it was buried in a place where he built a house so the place was in his garden, and they came to dig it up in the middle of the night, and there was a boy, his name was Bob, and he heard a mysterious noise and he looked out of the window and it was all being dug up, a chest, with a lantern; and he took a potato-gun—well, Mummy, you know what a potato gun is; Martin's got one: it digs out a bit of potato and shoots it—and said "Spivs!" and they all thought it was real and surrendered and he shut them in the cellar. Mummy, could you have a cellar built on to this house, do you think?

Christopher said they wouldn't have surrendered, they'd have smashed the lantern and fled into the night—Mummy, *fled into the night*—and escaped in their car at the gate. And Martin said a much better idea was to mix with them in the darkness so that they didn't notice an extra one, and hang on the back of their car and find out where they went and get all the other treasure they'd have there. And I said they didn't have a car, and they said why not, and Hilary said it would be much better to dial 999 and the police would come; Miss Fisk once dialled 999 and in about three seconds—or it might have been four seconds;

three or four seconds I think it was—a huge black car whizzed up and stopped and doors opened all over it and policemen rushed out in every direction. Mummy, did you *know* she dialled 999? Well, it wasn't a burglar really, it was only a relation, only they were on holiday—the people she dialled it because of, I mean. Mummy, they *didn't have* a car, and why should I make them have a car when they didn't have a car?

Hilary said she was going to write a story too, and Christopher said no, she'd have to think of something different, like how to dress a doll or something, and she said why did we always make her do the dull things, and she would say how to make a paper seagull with wings that flap, only then she started and couldn't remember after folding it up what you did next, and Martin and Christopher started making darts with the paper, and we saw who could make one go through the ventilator, but nobody did, except I *nearly* did.

Mummy, aren't there any more cabbage stumps? May I have something to eat, please? Mummy, they all said my story wasn't any good, even Hilary—they all wanted to make it different. Mummy, it was a *very good* story, just like one I had in my Annual at Christmas, and they *didn't* have a car, they had bicycles, and they escaped from the cellar and I followed them—I mean Bob did—on roller-skates, right to the edge of a cliff where they smuggled things, and there was a telephone box and I dialled 999 and a black car with policemen *rushed* up. And if they don't like it they can write all the stories and everything themselves. *Why* don't they think it's good when it is good and will take up such a nice lot of room, Mummy, *why* don't they?

The Crime Wave

THE crime wave has reached an advanced stage in our neighbourhood, and the residents are getting very perturbed about it. As the *Meekings Argus and Herald Bulletin* said in a leading article the other day, "Not only is the district no longer safe for law-abiding citizens; it is no longer safe for criminals either."

This state of affairs began some time ago when an old gentleman was set upon and robbed by a thug who, before he had taken three paces with the swag, was immediately set upon and robbed by another thug. After the fierce struggle that ensued the surviving thug was in such a gravely weakened condition that he found himself set upon and robbed by the old gentleman. There the transaction closed.

No great alarm would have been felt at this incident if it had not been immediately followed by a number of letters in the local press calling attention to the fearful prevalence of car stealing. This was so rife in the district, the letters complained, that it was no longer safe to leave one's car standing outside a house for a few moments while one burgled it. "There has even been one case," it was stated, "where two burglars in a small way of business left a house which they had been burgling just in time to see their so-called victim driving gleefully away in their car, which was of considerably greater value than the entire contents of the house. Is this British fair play?"

After this outcry there was a slight lull before the wave rose to a greater height than ever. In the house of my neighbour Harrison it may be said to have reached epic proportions. Harrison heard a noise in his study one night and crept downstairs to find five burglars crowded round his desk, arguing in fairly low tones about how to open a secret drawer they had come across. Harrison was listening with some interest, he says, as he had never realized till then that he was in possession of a secret drawer, when another man flitted in and began to pick the burglars' pockets. Harrison simply went and stood outside, and when the pickpocket came out Harrison stuck an old typewriter brush in his ribs and held him up. He got six fat wallets and four-and-six in change, and when he got back to his study he found the burglars just leaving. After opening his secret drawer they had missed their wallets and now thought it necessary to find the thief. They sounded so indignant about it, Harrison says, that he thought it would be tactless to reveal his presence.

Soon after this another friend of mine was so troubled by persistent burglars, who came practically every evening at about eleven and left shortly before dawn, possibly to catch an early train to town, that he moved right out of the house and went to stay with some relatives nearby. He watched his house closely, however, and presently noticed that the burglars had

given up going to town and were staying in the house all day as well as most of the night. After a while they moved in some small articles of furniture and personal belongings. My friend has been keeping an eye on them, and he says they seem quite comfortably off. He plans to burgle the place any night now.

It's all very well, but I tremble to think what will happen if he does. Already there has been a great deal of grumbling from the professional criminals in the neighbourhood, and one can't help sympathizing with their views. It simply doesn't do nowadays to jeopardize the livelihood of a whole class in this way without a second thought, and the dangerous tendencies in this direction already obvious here may well spread further afield. Before long we shall have jewellers throwing bricks through the windows of bandits' cars in broad daylight and insurance companies getting into people's houses and setting fire to their policies. And then where shall we all be? In gaol, presumably, if there are enough out-of-work professional criminals left to form an honest jury.

Beauty

Two eyes, one nose, one mouth—these features
Are common to all human creatures;
But much depends upon the place
They occupy upon the face.



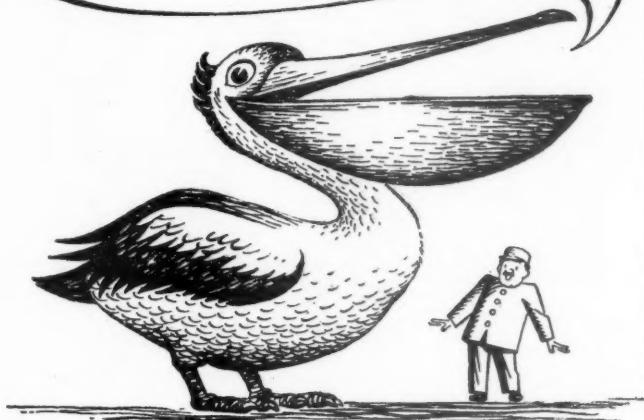
"We wondered if you'd care to come to a sort of party on the nineteenth—everybody brings something."

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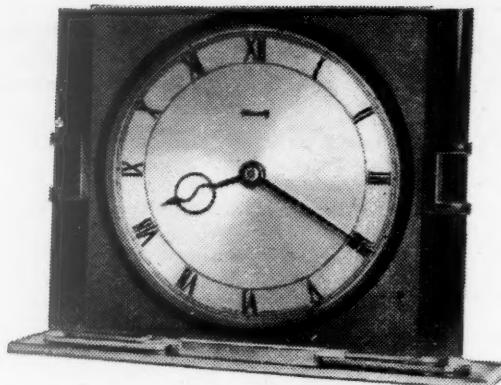


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C.58a



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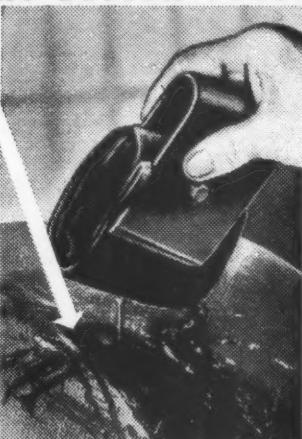
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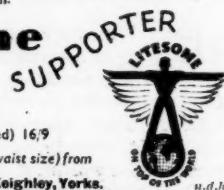
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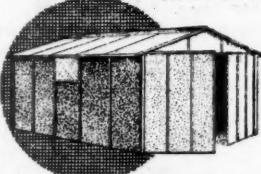
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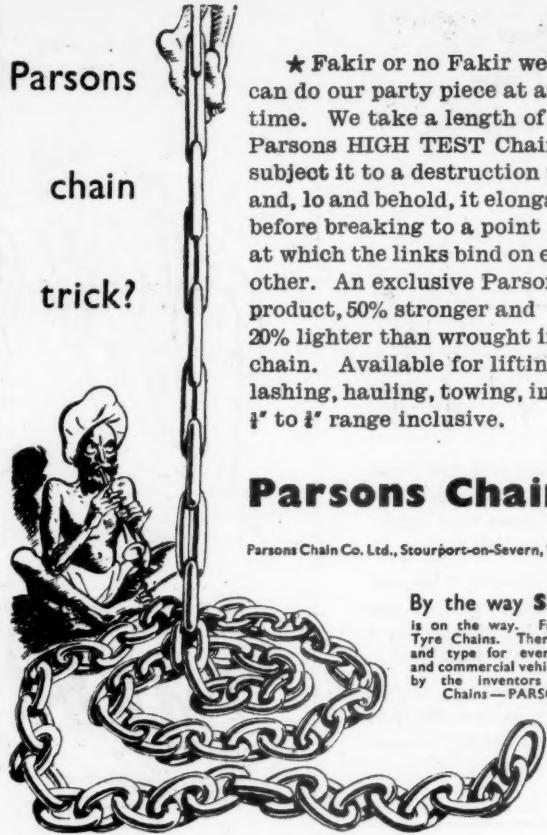
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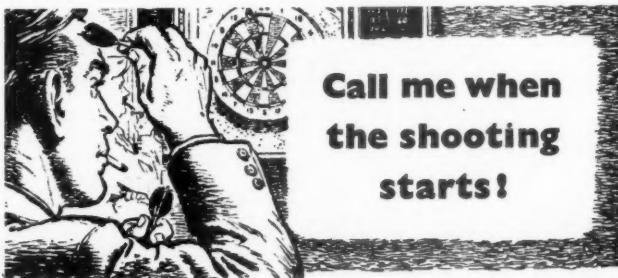
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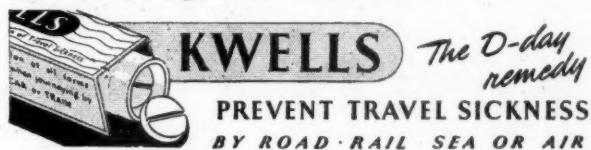


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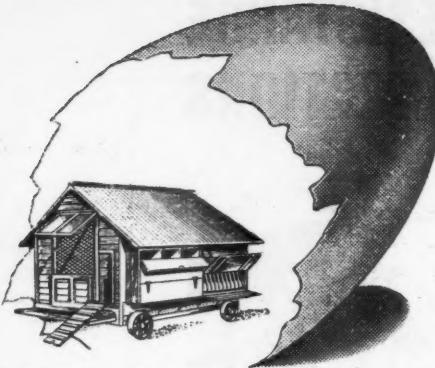
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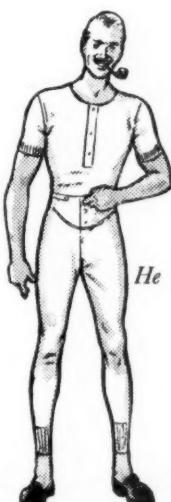
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UNDERWEAR TYPES

The
Bundler . . .



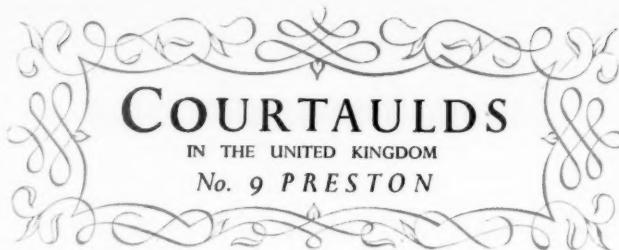
He wears the kind of pants that make
Festoons about his waist,
His tailor is ashamed of him,
His wife deplores his taste.



He ought to see a Wolsey man,
Whose lightsome basic kit
Is shapely and Apollo-like,
And Duo-shrunk to fit.

Wolsey

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COURTAULDS

IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

No. 9 PRESTON

After a short-lived falling off between 1929 and 1931 the demand for rayon again took the upward trend it had been following since Courtaulds had first begun producing it in 1906. Despite general trade depression, the British public in 1932 bought more rayon than ever before and in the two following years demand went higher still—the outcome of a continued policy of giving better quality at lower prices.

This steady growth of public confidence led in 1934 to Courtaulds deciding to build at Preston in Lancashire a new viscose rayon yarn factory (their fifth in the country), planned to add another 30% to production. It was eight years since the Company had designed a new yarn factory, and when building started in 1935 important improvements were embodied to lower costs and raise quality still further.

So Red Scar Works came into being, named after an old mansion nearby. It was the largest single rayon "unit" Courtaulds had so far installed in Great Britain.

Production at Preston began in 1939, and very soon afterwards important savings expected from the new methods and machinery were more than realised.

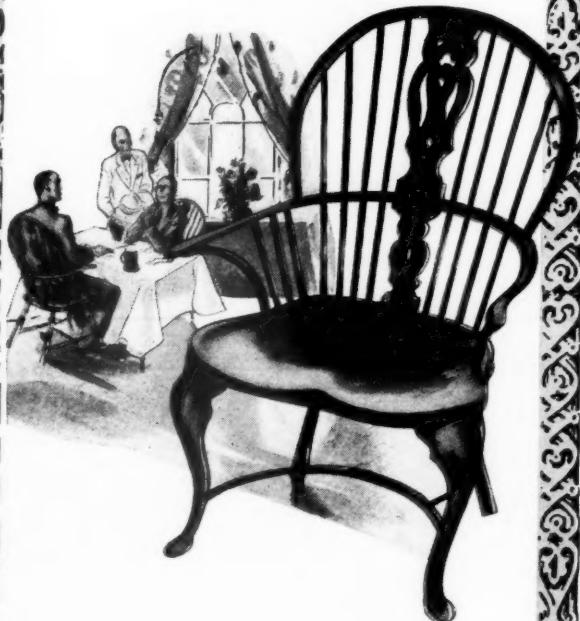
Completion of the factory's equipment was impeded by the war, during which a large area of floor-space was requisitioned and about one in five of its employees joined the Forces.

Today, of 25,000 people employed by Courtaulds in the United Kingdom, some 2,000 are hard at it in Proud Preston's Red Scar Works, the Company's most modern rayon yarn factory.

This is one of a series of statements to inform the public of some part of the contribution made by Courtaulds' industrial enterprise to economic well-being in various districts of the United Kingdom.

Issued by Courtaulds Limited, 16 St. Martins-le-Grand, London, E.C.1.

*at the
friendly
inn*



Good company in friendly surroundings is a centuries-old tradition of our inns. Often the craftsmanship of furniture maker, of glassmaker and potter has helped to create the genial atmosphere. There were the famous Windsor chairs, sometimes shaped while the wood was green. They once were inn furniture. Now many of them snuggle, old and mellow, by the firesides of collectors. And it may well be that some of the good furniture which makes the inn so pleasant today will in turn be sought after.